



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

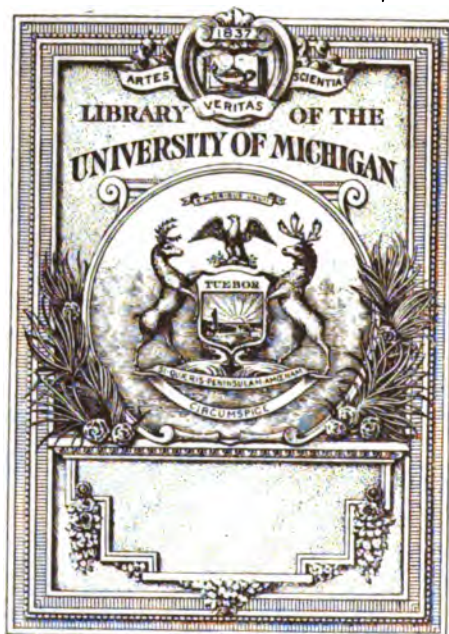
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



AP  
4  
J184





THE  
MONTHLY PACKET

HALF-YEARLY VOLUME



EDITED BY CHRISTABEL R. COLERIDGE

AND

ARTHUR INNES.

*NEW SERIES—XVI.*

VOLUME XCVI.

PARTS DLXIX. TO DLXXIV. JULY—DECEMBER, 1898.

LONDON

A. D. INNES AND COMPANY, LIMITED.

.. 1898



**The Grosvenor Press,  
UNWIN BROTHERS,  
WORKING AND LONDON.**

# INDEX.

	PAGE
Across Two Oceans. By C. Parkinson . . . . .	259
Ambrose the Great, St. By Helen Zimmern . . . . .	148
Among the Bracken . . . . .	661
Attic Window, From My. By Annie Groser Hurd . . . . .	103, 225, 342, 465, 587, 696
Blind Man's Holiday. By D. Clutterbuck . . . . .	35
China Cupboard, The . . . . .	109, 231, 349, 471, 591, 704
Conquest of London, The. By Dorothea Gerard . . . . .	361, 483, 603
Cornelius. By Katharine Hills . . . . .	186
Ecclesiastical Significance of Plants, The. By M. F. Clifton . . . . .	199
Festa at San Gimignano, A. By Ethel Halsey . . . . .	651
Finnuala, the Swan Maiden. By K. L. Montgomery . . . . .	543
Fortunes of the Gobelins, The. By F. S. Robinson . . . . .	22
Free Library, Growth of a Great . . . . .	301
From My Attic Window . . . . .	103, 225, 342, 465, 587, 696
Gobelins, the Fortunes of. By F. S. Robinson . . . . .	22
Gospel Writ in Steel, The. By Arthur Paterson . . . . .	1, 121, 241, 391
Great Landlord, A. . . . .	431
Growth of a Great Free Library. By Theodore Nowns . . . . .	301
Holly, Legends and Superstitions About. By F. M. M. . . . .	633
How they Fought then . . . . .	411
Lady of the Mist, The. By G. M. Robins . . . . .	638
Main Chance, The. By C. R. Coleridge . . . . .	87, 209, 315
Midsummer Day in Sweden . . . . .	382
Mountain Sketch in Wales, A . . . . .	314
Mrs. Padbury . . . . .	417

	PAGE
Of Rivers and Streams . . . . .	79
Off the High Road. By Eleanor C. Price . . . . .	41, 158, 271, 441
On a Priory Terrace. By Laura E. Ridding . . . . .	86
St. Ambrose the Great. By Helen Zimmern . . . . .	148
Some Celtic Love-Songs. By L. M. McCraith . . . . .	36
Some Small Deer. By Barbara Clay Finch . . . . .	66
Somervile the Poet. By H. I. Arden . . . . .	504
Strong God Circumstance, The. By Helen Shipton . . . . .	554, 666
Through Pink Glasses. By E. H. Lacon Watson . . . . .	100
Two Great Allegories. By Fanny G. Moore . . . . .	529
Uprooted. By M. Quiller Couch . . . . .	515

# THE MONTHLY PACKET.

## NEW SERIES.

---

JULY, 1898.

---

### *THE GOSPEL WRIT IN STEEL.*

BY ARTHUR PATERSON, AUTHOR OF 'FATHER AND SON,'  
'FOR FREEDOM'S SAKE,' ETC.

---

#### CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN the couriers of Sherman's staff heard the news about John they were too much surprised even to swear. When they recovered, the criticisms of the General's choice were extremely vigorous, every one prophesying failure, even Sergeant Hornber, though he began by defending his friend against the insinuation of political favouritism.

'You lie !' he said, with an oath ; 'the boy is straight—a damned sight straighter than any one here. Raw ? That may be, but not one of you has worked harder, or better. He can ride, and I will bet that he can fight ; while for headpiece he'll beat the crowd. No—that boy will plan out his ideas like a map an' he'll do his level best, but he'll fail at last. It is not in him to take hold of men. He won't have an idea of commanding—he can't, for he's never done it. He were not brought up to it. I don't go much on officers, as you all know, but a real one, a good West Point man—oh, you may yell,' as a general howl of dissent greeted the word, 'I know what I am saying, and you don't ; I say a good West Pointer such as Uncle Billy or Grant, or, be darned to 'em ! like those Southerners Lee and Jackson and Joey Johnston, has a something about him that makes a cuss obey and follow blind. West Pointers are trained to it. We ain't. Take John. He's patient and gentle—obstinate too in his way,

but Stoneman's troopers, even ten of 'em, will want more than that. Every last one will think he knows more than Johnny. Each will play his own game, and the whole bunch be taken prisoners by the Rebs. That's my opinion.'

The rest were unanimous that the party would not get to work at all.

'I know Pantling,' said one. 'He's an ugly brute. If he parts with a trooper, much less ten, I'll eat my hat; he'll send the boy back to Sherman quicker than he went. You'll see. Then Uncle Billy will rar' round and tell John to quit. I was under Pantling once; he'll bullyrag and cuss John till he'll give his life to clear out of range of the colonel's tongue. Pshaw, he'll not be in it.'

John, if he had been given leisure to think about himself, would probably have agreed in the main with Hornber. But he had no time to think. As he rode to General Stoneman's lines he thought only of the work before him; and wondered whether Sherman would leave it to his discretion where he went, or work out a route for him. The men must be carefully selected, that was important; equally so was the quality and condition of their horses. As for provisions, with all respect to the general, John determined that a supply for two days would be sufficient. They ought to ride as light as possible. Also they must be disguised, so that, if necessary, they would pass the enemy's outposts without attracting attention, and purchase a meal now and then from farms or even outlying houses of small towns and villages, and pick up news. All these things and more passed through John's mind before he reached Colonel Pantling's tent and presented his letter to an orderly there. As Hornber said, 'he could plan his ideas out like a map.' He had now to execute them.

Lieutenant-Colonel Pantling was smoking a choice cigar when the note from General Sherman reached his hands. There were not many officers in the Atlanta campaign who indulged themselves in this manner at ten o'clock in the morning; but the cavalry had not much to do just now, and Colonel Pantling partook freely at all times of the good things of life. He was a large and heavy man with a puffy face; his eyes were bloodshot, with inflamed lids, his cheeks flabby, his nose extremely red, and, worst sign of all, his hand shook all the time he was reading Sherman's note. His face,

however, was not without good points; his forehead was square; he had a heavy, fighting chin, while a pair of thick black eyebrows gave an impressiveness to eyes that held within them a tigerish fierceness not pleasant to meet. Drinker the colonel might be; violent in temper and sensual in disposition; but he was neither a fool nor a coward, and no man, who could avoid it, ever 'crossed his line of fire.'

'Ten of my smartest men,' he muttered, 'to be commanded by—*what*?—a courier! By Gad, Sherman is clean off the rails! Mad or drunk, or both.'

He looked at the orderly.

'Send that courier here.'

When Colonel Pantling saw John's quiet face he smiled grimly beneath his moustache. John did not see the smile, but in the colonel's eyes there was an expression he did not like.

'Who are you?'

'John Burtleson, courier to General Sherman.'

'Do you know the contents of this letter?'

'The general gave it me to read, colonel.'

'In that case,' muttered Pantling to himself, 'there can be no doubt. He is quite mad.'

Aloud he said with slow, contemptuous emphasis—

'What are you going to do about it?'

'Obey orders, colonel.'

'My orders—yes. Why, the thing is absurd. My boys would eat a man like you. Anyway I cannot spare them at present—not one. You may go.'

The colonel put the letter in his pocket, nodded carelessly, and took up a newspaper he had been reading.

John looked at him in amazement; that such a reception as this would be given to an order from the commander-in-chief had not entered his head. For a moment he stood speechless, wondering if it were a practical joke.

'What answer am I to take to General Sherman, colonel?'

Colonel Pantling turned upon him.

'You here still? If you don't leave my tent sharp, my man, you will be under arrest in less than a minute.'

John saluted respectfully.

'Will you be good enough to tell me, colonel, how I am to get the boys? It will take me all my time to complete my arrangements and report to the commander-in-chief before sundown. I would like to start in at once.'

The colonel sprang up with an oath, and took a step towards John as though he would have struck him.

John did not move an inch.

'I don't wish to inconvenience you any, sir,' he went on in his quietest tone, 'but I am bound to see this through.'

Colonel Pantling glared at him for a minute or two without speaking, then suddenly laughed.

'Curse you, but you have sand anyway. There are not many men who could face me so.'

He threw away his cigar and buckled on his sword.

'I am going to inspect the men myself,' he said, frowning again. 'Come with me. As to you picking any, I will see you d——d first!'

He spoke with a savage aggressiveness that would have goaded a quick-tempered man to retort; but John did not speak, standing aside for the colonel to pass first from the tent. Then he swung himself into the saddle and waited while Pantling gave an order to one of his subalterns. Presently a company of troopers, all well-mounted, smart, soldierly men, formed up before their commander.

'Boys, I have received a message from General Sherman asking for ten of you for some expedition, to be under command of this courier. I never disregard the wishes of my superiors, so you shall hear what the man has to say. Now,' turning to John, 'tell these men all you know, and see what they will answer.'

'I have your permission, colonel, to address them?'

'If they will listen.'

At this some of the men laughed, while others made remarks upon John's personal appearance. But he did not hear them; he was not thinking of himself; his mind was full of what he had been sent to do, and this took away all nervousness, all unreadiness of speech, even the irritation caused by the colonel's manner. With erect mien and stern face John rode up to the men who were laughing at him, and looked down the line with an observant, critical eye.

'Your colonel has told you why I am here. I understand you are the smartest men in this regiment. I hope so, for the general has no use for any but the best. I want ten of you on the best horses you can find. Our business will be to ride round Johnston's army as Jeb Stuart rode round ours in Virginia. It will be work of the toughest kind—night work



mostly ; and we will be in danger all the while. If the Rebs get upon our track we shall have the tightest kind of a time, and have to race them for life ; if we fail to get away there will be no quarter. But if we are successful it is likely that the army will have cause to be grateful to you. Our orders will come direct from the general himself. He will inspect every man I bring away with me, and you know what that means if you do your duty.'

He paused to mark the effect of his words. The men were silent. There were no more personal remarks or laughter. Whatever this man might be to look at, he spoke the truth ; he was in earnest, and he was not afraid of men.

'One thing more. The colonel has said I am to command. That is true ; and if the raid is a failure I shall get the blame, while if it succeeds each of you will have his share of praise and profit. Now, tell me, how many of you will pull this through with me ?'

He rode slowly down the line, and Colonel Pantling, who was expecting a roar of laughter, was startled by a rousing cheer and a shout that was unmistakable.

John wheeled and cantered up to him.

'With your permission, colonel, I will pick my men from this company. More than half have volunteered.'

'Why don't you take them all, curse you ?' was the reply, the colonel now beginning to lose his temper entirely. 'Take the regiment ! Take me ! If once they let such toughs as you get into the army it is time for us to leave.'

John saluted, calm and imperturbable.

'I understand that I have your permission.'

'Yes,' roared the colonel, holding down his rage by main force as he saw that any further display of it would make him ridiculous. 'Pick them, and be d——d !'

John needed no second bidding. With a matter-of-fact air that would have astounded Sergeant Hornber he ordered the men to file past him, making them do so three times before he made his choice. An interview with the quarter-master followed, and a minute examination of kits, arms, and horses. Here John proved very hard to please, his quickness in detecting defects and good points in the animals strengthening his position with his men in a way nothing else would have done. All this took time, and it was getting late before he was able to report himself to the general. Sherman was engaged,

and sent word that the men were to come for inspection in an hour. This interval John spent with his old companions, who complimented him upon the smart appearance of his troopers, and gave him warm congratulations. Hornber alone made no remark, but afterwards, when alone with John, he said in his most abrupt tone—

‘Boy, the way you have acted gets right away with me. I never thought to see a man change as you have since this morning. You’ll command a regiment before long, or I’m a liar.’

‘Just about what you must be, I reckon,’ John retorted without smiling. Reaction had come after the excitement and he felt tired and out of sorts.

‘I was this morning,’ Hornber said, with a solemn shake of the head; ‘I ain’t now.’

‘Simple foolishness. What are ten men?’

‘Don’t matter. They want handling, specially men from the cavalry. Now, mark me, this is the thin edge of the wedge as they say.’

‘To another world,’ John interrupted. ‘I have the feeling all through me to-night that I will never get out of it alive, and that will mean that I have broken my word. My God, Hornber, I should never have come South at all!’

The sergeant gasped.

‘Eh, what? you croaking!—you? Blame it all, Johnny, what do you mean?’

John’s face worked, and he clenched his hands.

‘I’m thinking of my mother, old friend. ’Tis not myself. God knows my life is not worth much to me. But I swore that while she lived I would keep away from *this*. For the sake of my—friend and her friend, I came South to try and get a man out of Santanelle prison. I knew I must take risks for that. But this is different. It is another line altogether. I ought to have refused to go, but I did not think when Sherman spoke. He gave me no warning. Never said a word until he put the letter into my hand. It is too late to step back now.’

‘Too late!’ roared Hornber, finding speech at last. ‘You would deserve to be hanged by the neck if you thought of such a thing. What are you made of, anyhow? The chance that has rolled to your feet not a private in the whole army but would sell his soul to buy. Carry this through in the

way I believe now, s'elp me, that you will, and you are bound to get on. Once Uncle Billy grips a man, he stays right by him. He will never fail to give you opportunity. Your fortune in the army has been made to-day, and before you've served three months, and yet you croak ! Are you all there ?'

John smiled.

'Don't worry. I have gone too far to draw out again, I know, and I will do my best. I was wrong to be in it though ; I did not join the army, friend, to get promotion. But time is up. I shall not see you again, as we start at moon-rise.'

They shook hands.

'Where do you strike first ?' Hornber asked.

John laughed.

'That's for the Rebs to discover, sergeant, if they can.'

## CHAPTER XX.

THE failure of General Hooker to carry the position at the 'New Hope' cross-roads before the enemy occupied it in force placed the Union army in an awkward position. It was the critical point of the campaign. No one really knew how much so but Sherman ; yet from the general to the rank and file there was a feeling of uneasiness which a few days' more desultory marching and counter-marching, fighting through deep forests, under torrents of rain, and ankle-deep in mud and mire to meet a foe who gave way in one place only to break out in another, would have turned into discouragement and worse. Southern writers have naturally laid stress upon the size of Sherman's army, and attributed his subsequent success to that fact more than to the skill of its commander or the quality of the troops. But a very large force in an extremely difficult country is a doubtful blessing, and from the commissariat point of view it is the reverse.

This fact was painfully obvious to Sherman the day after he listened to John summing up the weakness of the position to Hornber on the 23rd of May. He had abandoned for the time being his base of supplies, trusting that Johnston, finding his flank turned, would abandon the strong position he held across the railroad, and fall back, leaving the line clear. On

the 27th, after four days' fighting, he found that a force too strong to be dislodged without serious loss lay directly in the way of his main army, the army of the Cumberland ; that McPherson, whom he had ordered to his assistance, was several miles away to the eastward, confronted by a Confederate force at Dallas, and that Schofield, to the left rear, was separated from the main army by three miles of very difficult country. The situation was critical. The army was dispersed in three fractions, any one of which might be suddenly assailed by the Confederates in full strength. The railway, also, was exposed and unguarded, and accurate information of the enemy's strength and dispositions was of absolutely vital importance. Hornber had good reason to congratulate John upon the possibilities which his little expedition contained. But it was a nervous moment when the general walked out to look at the men, and John did not breathe freely until the inspection had been concluded with a few blunt words of encouragement that were worth more than many speeches from any other man. When it was over the general took John into his tent, where a map was spread.

'You show me,' said Sherman, 'just where we are on that.' John did so.

'Now take these compasses. Where would you strike first if left to your own idea ?'

John bent over the map and thought a minute, Sherman noticing with a twinkle in his eye that the request—unusual, to say the least of it—from a commander-in-chief to a private was taken by this man quite as a matter of course.

'I should make the railroad, general, right east here between Ackworth and Kingston.' He pointed to Ackworth as he spoke, a small town ten miles away.

'Why so ?' Sherman said in a gruff, sceptical tone. 'Why not Marietta, ten miles south, the southernmost point, as far as we know, that Johnston holds ? I expect you to ride round the whole army. Ackworth is about the centre.'

'I know that,' John said, forgetting in the interest of the argument whom he was addressing, 'but I take it you will want first of all to find out what he is doing on the railroad line from here to Kingston. My intention was to report to you after I had prospected the line from Ackworth northwards, then ride round Kenesaw, Marietta, and Dallas. But to the north first.'

Sherman nodded.

'You have the right notion, and I will leave you to work it out. What I require is a clear and correct idea where Johnston lies ; the number of men he has in each place ; whether he shows any sign of threatening the railroad northwards, and as much information concerning his movements as you can get together. I have a good foundation to guess on as we stand, but guess-work will not do just now. In short, your duty is to find the enemy and count him—but don't let him find you. Send back a message by a trusty man, when you have found out about the railroad, and report yourself in person in forty-eight hours. Between now and then do what you like ; go where you like ; I will trust you, Burletson.'

Sherman spoke with the careful distinctness of one who measures every word and expects it to be remembered. At the end, without unbending the customary sternness of his face, he held out his hand. John took it very respectfully.

'I will do all that is in me, general,' he said earnestly, 'to bring back what you need.'

'So. When do you start ?'

'I reckoned we should have light enough by two o'clock. The moon rises an hour before.'

'You have food ?'

'For two days, general, and a blanket apiece. We have also grey overcoats and flap hats.'

'I have no more to say, then.'

John walked slowly back to his men. They were asleep, black motionless figures by a dying fire. He pulled the embers together and roused a blaze ; studied a map Sherman had given him, then rolled himself in his blanket and slept also. He woke at one o'clock, roused his men, and made them eat a meal of bread and coffee. By two they were on their way, riding by the stars. It was hard riding, for though the rain had ceased and the sky was clear, the ground was soft and treacherous, their way lying over rough hills of gravelly soil, into which their horses sank deeply. John was glad, however, to get over this exposed ground by night, and pushed on steadily though at a gentle pace. When day dawned they had crossed the railway and found cover in the skirts of some forest-land to the east of the road. Through the trees, here, in a northerly direction, John determined that their course should lie, but after the night ride they must eat and the horses rest.

On their left, towards the railway, was a snake-fence enclosing a field of corn, and further away among the trees curled a wreath of smoke. John called a halt and held a council of war. After careful consideration of his position he had resolved to consult his men before taking any important step, reserving the right to decide every question himself. The point now was, whether it would be wise to seek information at the homestead, and perhaps get a meal there, or to find their way by compass and map observation. John himself suggested the former plan and was flatly opposed by the spokesman of the men—one Bob Spenniker. Spenniker was a little slip of a man, not much over five feet high; he had black beady eyes which were never still for two consecutive moments of time; a lean, sinewy body; a brown and wrinkled face, and a head as round as an apple, covered with stiff, black hair. He was called 'the rat,' and well did he deserve the name. His morals were bad, and his language worse; but for endurance, activity, quick wit and courage there was hardly his equal in the regiment.

'That is wrong,' was his answer to John's proposal. 'We'll be found out. Do you think you look like a Southerner? Do I, or any of us? Not a little bit. Let's trust to our own ears and eyes, and leave the farms round here alone. That's my advice. They'll have us else, I'll bet you all the whiskey ever I hope to drink. You don't know—I do.'

He nodded with the calm assurance of superior wisdom, and the men, expecting a mild assent from their leader, winked at one another. But John gave them no satisfaction. He asked for more opinions, and receiving none said to Bob Spenniker—

'We differ. I think it is worth while getting to talk with folk round here. There is much to learn from a gossiping woman, whatever her feelings be. She may let out more than she knows. Halt here, and whistle if there is any danger. I will go on alone.'

He spurred away briskly, making close observance of the farm and buildings as he went. They were in better condition than many he had seen, and the appearance of the woman who opened the door at his call, though she was plainly dressed, was not that of a small farmer's wife.

John raised his hat.

'Good morning, ma'am.'

'Morning,' she answered, with expressionless eyes. 'What may your business be?'

'I am a courier. Can you tell me how to strike the nearest way to Allatoona?'

She pointed northwards.

'A track to the right of those trees runs into a road that will lead you there.'

'I thank you,' he said. Then in a careless tone: 'Happen you may tell me something I want to know. I am hunting for General Johnston. Will I find him at Allatoona?'

The woman stared hard at her questioner. John had expected that she would show surprise, even amusement, at such a question. But there was no surprise in that face—a shrewd, strong face, he thought, with a lurking suspicion in it.

'The general is there like enough,' she said slowly. 'It is hard telling, for he's everywhere and anywhere, just where he's needed most. What d'ye want with him?'

John tapped his breast-pocket significantly.

'I have my instructions.'

'Who may you be from?'

'General Hardee, down south.'

The woman gave an intelligent nod, and as John turned to go called after him.

'Say, courier, have you breakfasted?'

'Why, no.'

'Come in, then, and have a bit. 'Tain't often we around here get a soldier so civil-spoke as you. Get ye down.'

There was a marked change in her manner now; it was kindness itself. John considered an instant.

'That is very amiable of you, ma'am, but there are ten boys with me. If you have enough for all I can pay; but I could not leave them.'

'If their manners are as clever as yours, young man, we'll not ask for money; if you 'uns keep Sherman out, we 'uns will feed ye, and be glad to do it.'

John galloped back to the boys.

'Trapped!' said Bob Spenniker. 'Bet you five dollars down, boss—now!'

'Stay here alone, then,' John retorted sharply, 'if it scares you. The rest will follow with me. Come, boys.'

They followed him, and Bob Spenniker led the way. They

tied their horses to a fence near the front door, and were presently eating fried hominy cakes, bacon and beans, and quaffing butter-milk with great internal satisfaction. There were no men to be seen—a fact John should have noticed. Bob saw it at once. The only people they could see were the woman who had invited them and a girl of sixteen—a pretty and graceful damsel, who was all smiles and attention and received more than one compliment from the men, though Bob, whose eyes were in a dozen different directions at once, gazed at her with intense suspicion. John did not pay much attention to the girl. He was kept busy with his hostess, parrying certain home questions of hers and trying to get a direct answer to carefully put queries of his own.

This he found difficult until he put one about her husband?

‘No, my man ain’t ‘listed—the same as most,’ she said. ‘He makes himself of use to the general, scouting and suchlike. We know General Johnston well—God bless his face. Any of your boys ever see him?’ looking round at them.

‘Not so,’ John answered for the rest. ‘We’ve mostly served in Virginny. When will your good man be back, ma’am? I would have liked to have had a word with him?’

‘That no soul can tell,’ she replied. ‘He’s with the general now somewhere, as he is most always these times. Jean, my daughter, more hominy cakes. Quick, gell.’

The familiar name made John start, and he looked at the girl with interest, tender thoughts of home in his heart. The sound of a hoarse choke roused him from his reverie, and he beheld Bob Spenniker coughing violently.

‘Hominy’s too much for me,’ the little man said as John looked up. ‘I put in more than the machine would hold and nearly bust.’

He finished with a peculiar chuckle and looked out of the window. John, following his eyes, saw a body of horsemen in the distance. There was still time to get away. John looked round at his men, rose slowly, they doing the same, and went to the window.

‘Who is coming there?’ he said to the woman. ‘Do you know?’

He noticed that she was eyeing him with great sharpness, and Bob’s suspicions struck him forcibly.



'Aye. It's the man you want to see—General Joseph Johnston and his staff. I know, for my husband is with them.'

The men drew long breaths, but John did not stir.

'We are in luck, then,' was all he said. 'Boys, we must move out, for I guess the general is coming here. What do I owe you, ma'am?'

He took out a purse so leisurely that Bob Spenniker could have knocked him down; every moment of delay made escape more difficult. It was nigh impossible now.

'I tell you I take naught,' the woman said. 'If you are friends you are welcome to all. If enemies'—she paused an instant and looked maliciously at Bob—'I'll be paid later on.'

John laughed so naturally that his men stared.

'We have to thank you, then, for a rare good breakfast and for something better still. General Johnston is the man I most want to see. Come, boys, smartly.'

He strode out with steady step, not quickening it in the least, even outside. As the men prepared to mount he said in a low voice—

'I am going to interview the General. You must stay still and keep together. If we have to bolt strike south-west. I do not think it need come to that. Remember, if any officer speaks to you we are from Hardee's army. Don't say a word more than you can help.'

'Right,' answered Bob for the rest. 'But you've clean gone out of your reckoning. We'll be coralled, sure.'

'Why?'

'She'll do it,' pointing with his thumb at the farm. 'She looked us right through. She'll tell them all she knows.'

'We must chance that. Ride forward now to meet the staff. Halt when I give the word. March!'

'Well, I'm darned!' muttered Bob to himself half aloud. 'He's going to face a Reb general bold as a skunk. I'd rather be shot first. Yet I'd bet I'd——'

'Silence!' said John sharply. 'Keep your thoughts to yourself. Here they come.'

An officer of the staff galloped up. John saluted.

'What are you?'

'Scouts—from General Hardee.'

'Hand me your papers.'

'I have none.'

‘How’s that?’

‘We were sent to reconnoitre Sherman’s army, and that we’ve done; but last night we ran too near one of his out-posts, and had to get clear the best way we could. We lost our bearings, and stopped at this farm to inquire.’

‘You must report to General Johnston at once.’

He wheeled, and they rode together into the general’s presence. So far all seemed safe. The officer suspected nothing, though the request for papers had taken John desperately by surprise, and he had not much confidence in the adopted Southern drawl he now endeavoured to put into his voice, taken from a Southern man he once knew in Wisconsin.

General Johnston was a small man, very upright, with closely cut beard and moustache turning grey. He had a keen, kindly face, and an impressive dignity of manner; but he looked, John thought, like a man worn out with ill-health and mental worry. The uniforms of his officers were threadbare and weather-stained, and not a horse was in decent condition; all were gaunt and overworked.

‘You are with Hardee,’ the general said. ‘What are you doing so far from your lines?’

‘Reconnoitring, general. We have been around two of Sherman’s armies, and I was starting right back when I heard you were in the neighbourhood, and ventured to report to you first.’

‘Quite right. Your news?’

‘Sherman ‘pears to carry all before him, general.’

‘What supplies has he?’

‘As far as we could make out a very large train, well guarded. We found no weak places, though we looked well.’

Johnston received this with some impatience.

‘You have no good news. Yet we are holding him at New Hope crossing.’

‘By your leave, general, McPherson is getting back from Dallas, and Schofield is closing from the left. We will not hold them long.’

The general turned in his saddle with a jerk of the head.

‘Polk, you hear that? It had better be done, then, and at once.’

The officer bowed.

‘No other course seems possible, general. Hardee must know.’

The general turned to John.

‘Do you return direct to your commander?’

‘Direct, general.’

‘I have important intelligence for him, which I will send by an officer of my staff under your escort. Wait with your men while I write a letter.’

John saluted and rode back, swiftly making plans.

‘The ball is rolling in our favour now,’ he said to his men. ‘We are to escort an officer of Johnston’s staff with despatches to Hardee. This was what I wanted—more than I dreamed of. That letter may be worth everything to us, and must be taken, with the bearer, when the time comes. Ride behind, and keep your eyes on me. When I lay my hand on his shoulder, close round, and cover him. If we are chased—’

‘Just what we shall be,’ interrupted Bob Spenniker. ‘That farm was a trap. See!’

The staff had halted some distance from the house, but some one was waving a handkerchief, and while Bob spoke a horseman left the group of officers and rode to the gate.

‘There,’ cried Bob, with triumph in his tone, ‘I told you how it would be. We have one chance, and only one—scoot and let the despatch go. Who says the same? There’s no time for ceremony.’

The men glanced at John. For an instant he did not speak. Then, striking his horse with the spur and bringing him so close to Spenniker’s that they almost touched one another, he drew a revolver.

‘You are right. No ceremony. One step, and you are a dead man—and so are those who follow you.’

Bob’s face changed, a smile broke over it, broadening to a grin, and then he swore from pure delight.

‘Thunder! I’ve fetched it out,’ he said in a loud whisper. ‘I did not think he could rar’ so and as a last stake I tried rushing. Put that thing away, captain. I never ran from a rebel yet, and I won’t begin now, except at your word. You can command me, and I will obey every time.’

There was the sound of a galloping horse and an officer rode up. John had no time to reply. This officer was a young man with fresh-coloured face, smooth-shaven, only redeemed from actual effeminacy and boyishness by a pair of honest, penetrating grey eyes. He nodded good-humouredly all round as he rode up.

'How are you, boys?' Then to John. 'I have the letter right enough. Let us be off as fast as we can tear. My name's Ralph Cunningham—Lieutenant. What is yours, courier?'

He spoke to John, who was the only one who had the presence of mind to salute him.

'Do you know the way?' the lieutenant went on.

'Yes, lieutenant.'

'Then let us make tracks at the lope.'

The escort was nothing loth. A glance behind them showed the man from the farm galloping back to the staff at full speed. A detachment would be sent in pursuit.

'Ride, boys,' John said in a tone that made the subaltern stare and frown—'Ride all you know.'

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE course John took was not the shortest route to Sherman's lines. It was necessary to keep in a southerly direction until out of reach of the enemy, or the suspicions of the lieutenant would at once be roused. Equally important was it to make for open country where the superior speed and condition of their horses could have full play. John had not bred horses for five years for nothing. In spite of the night ride his animals were still fresh and in far better condition than those of the Confederates. A few miles of hard riding and escape would be easy. Meanwhile, if they were pursued, what was to be done with Lieutenant Ralph Cunningham?

John rode at his right, Bob Spenniker on the left, and the men behind. All went well for a few minutes, the pace made by the lieutenant being hard enough to satisfy even his escort. He was mounted on a thoroughbred mare. Then came a shout and a pistol-shot from behind to attract the lieutenant's attention. At the same moment his mare plunged forward violently, defying all efforts to control her, and bolted at a pace Bob Spenniker and John, who had the best mounts, could scarcely keep up with. The circumstance astounded the lieutenant, who was unaware that Bob Spenniker had pricked her in the flank with a knife. By the time she was in order a clump of trees lay between them and the farm.

'The best-blooded beast I've ever seen, sir,' John remarked as the officer was about to speak. 'I would much like to know her pedigree.'

Cunnington's face, which had been puzzled and anxious, lit up at once with enthusiasm.

'"Messenger" was her sire; her mother was bred on our plantation. There are not many to beat her. What was that firing behind us?'

'Union scout, sir, maybe,' John answered. 'They are audacious enough for anything these times—Sherman's men,' adding quickly, '"Messenger?" he was the best horse ever seen this side of the Atlantic.'

'You may well say that. Ever seen him?'

'No; but I have been told a heap. Could you give me his points, lieutenant? I love a good horse rarely. This one ain't bad—though he don't begin to compare with your mare. What do you think of him?'

'A good beast,' was the answer—'a very good beast; bony and well-ribbed up, steps out freely and in good fix. Where and how do you manage to keep him in such condition? Johnston himself cannot get corn enough round here.'

John grinned.

'We struck these horses near the Union lines and made a trade. That pays sometimes.'

The lieutenant laughed, and then, replying to a second request, launched into a learned disquisition upon the points of 'Messenger,' the great English thoroughbred, sire in that day to some of the best horses in America.

John began to breathe again now. They had distanced their pursuers, and were almost out of danger. The next thing was to change the course toward the Union lines, and John, still talking horseflesh, began gradually to veer in a northerly direction. But they had not gone far when Cunnington called a halt.

'How's this, courier?' he said to John, looking round him. 'I thought you knew the way. The turn you have taken will run us into Sherman's rear. You had better let me guide you. I happen to know this country pretty well. We must strike south.'

John turned his head as if puzzled. The lad was still unsuspecting, and it was most desirable to keep him so, in case they ran into another body of the enemy; but they could

not afford to lose time. The arrest must come now. He raised his hand, and the men were fingering their revolvers, when Bob, who was scanning every grass blade and twig within sight, said in his driest tone—

‘We have run upon friends when least expecting ’em. Look ahead.’

John dropped his hand hastily and did so. Half hidden behind a tree a hundred yards away was a face and a pair of hands levelling a rifle at Lieutenant Cunningham. The rest of the man was carefully concealed, and so motionless was he that only the eyes of a frontiersman could have seen him.

John spurred his horse and placed himself in front of the lieutenant.

‘Don’t waste the bullet, friend, and lose your life,’ he called out. ‘You cannot shoot ten. We are from General Johnston. What are you?’

The man looked at him a moment as if rather inclined to let his rifle answer, then came from behind the tree. He had a face as gaunt and brown as an Indian’s, with unkempt hair and beard, and was dressed in greasy leather with a gaudy neck handkerchief, and cowhide shoes and moccasins.

‘I am keepin’ an eye for Yanks. Texan outpost of Hood’s division; Hardee’s army. If my trigger pulled easier,’ he added, with a grin, ‘you’d be in hell, young man. But I saw his uniform,’ with a jerk of the thumb at the direction of the lieutenant, ‘and so I held in.’

‘How many of you?’ said John, forgetting that it was his officer’s place to ask questions.

‘Twenty,’ was the cheering reply.

The lieutenant now rode forward. ‘I have despatches for your general,’ he said in an authoritative tone. ‘Take me to him, will you?’

The man laughed jeeringly. That a youthful subaltern of another regiment should think that he could command a Texan of Hood’s was amusing to the last degree.

‘Take yourself, my sonny,’ he said, with a sneer. ‘Our work lays here.’

Cunnington’s face flushed; his quick Southern temper rose in an instant.

‘D—— your impudence!’ he flashed out. ‘I will report you for insubordination. Where’s your officer?’

‘You will—what?’ growled the Texan, slipping his rifle into

his armpit and cocking it. But John, who had drawn a revolver to be prepared for emergencies, covered him, Bob Spenniker following suit.

'Obey orders, friend,' John said quietly. 'We are in a hurry.'

The man glared at the weapons and at the faces behind them, and then without speaking threw his rifle over his shoulder and strode away, the horsemen following.

'By George, courier,' the lieutenant said, laughing, 'you are not half so gentle as you look. I would rather be behind your fire than face it. That is often so, though, with you quiet men. Thanks.'

The subaltern in charge of the outpost turned out to be a friend of Cunningham's, and offered to add half his force to the escort, saying that Hardee's headquarters was ten miles off, and that the road was dangerous, as they were near the Yankee lines. John listened with painful intentness for Cunningham's reply.

'I will take five,' he said; adding privately to John, 'after our little experience I prefer that you and your boys should outnumber these Texans; yet they would be useful if we were let in for a brush with the blue-noses.'

The outpost were eating a hasty meal at this time, which John's men were invited to join. They did so and with remarkably good appetites considering that if the halt lasted too long members of Johnston's staff might overtake them, and that in any event they had a desperate struggle before them ahead. But it is a soldier's maxim to eat whenever he has food before him. John alone found it difficult, and was deeply thankful when the order to mount was given. He managed to get a moment alone with Bob Spenniker.

'We must strike as soon as we are well away from this crowd. Two must cover each Texan, I will take the lieutenant. We are not far from our lines, as you heard them say. Take no prisoners except Cunningham. Tie the rest up, and bring along the horses that don't stampede. It was well you had good eyes. We should all have been lost else.'

A faint wink quivered in Bob's eyelid.

'Texans, boss, is hell,' he said solemnly; 'but we will get away with that letter.'

They started, riding in silence. There was no more talk now of blooded mares and thoroughbreds; the only sound as

they rode was the ceaseless drip of the rain and the splash of the hoofs through the mud. They were in the midst of forest land again, and a thick mist was rising from the steaming, spongy ground. The prospect was depressing in the extreme to the Union men, and their courage began to drag and falter. They cursed the day they had volunteered for such an expedition; they cursed John for getting them into such a hole. They felt no confidence in themselves, and John's qualities as a fighter they knew nothing about. Texans had terrible reputations for quick shooting and handiness with knives, and these were powerful men, hard-faced and supple-jointed. John was unconscious of his men's condition. He had not been a leader long enough to know how much difference there is in men at different times. He supposed that they would be as much animated with his own sense of the vital importance of securing Johnston's despatch as Bob Spenniker appeared to be. John's difficulty with himself was to curb his impatience long enough. He longed for the struggle and had no fears of its result at all. He hardly expected a shot to be fired.

Five minutes passed; ten. They were beyond sight and hearing of the outpost. At any time another might be met with. John raised himself in his stirrups, looked at Bob, and laid his hand on Lieutenant Cunningham's shoulder, upon which every Union man cocked his rifle and called upon the Texan nearest him to surrender. John caught the lieutenant firmly by the collar.

'Dismount, sir.'

'What——'

'We are Union soldiers. Give me that despatch.'

'I will see you——'

The oath was lost in the struggle that followed. Gallantly the lieutenant grappled with his enemy; but John's grip held, though when Bob, who was not troubled with scruples, would have shot Cunningham to save trouble, John turned the revolver aside and saved his life. They were off their horses now, struggling on the ground. Putting forth all his strength John held Cunningham down, while Bob, with professional adroitness, picked his pocket of the precious letter and thrust it into John's breast. As he did so he whispered—

'Get to your horse and scoot—never mind him or any one. The boys are overmatched.'

John sprang up to look round when what seemed a stunning



blow on the back of the head threw him violently forward. He fell on his face, and but for the concentration of his mind upon the letter he must have been utterly stupefied. But he contrived to raise himself to his knees, and found his horse standing over him. He set his teeth, made a supreme effort, and crawled into the saddle. Then a deadly faintness overpowered him, and he was conscious of nothing more until he found himself slowly riding through the trees alone. His horse was proceeding at a gentle pace as if conscious of the condition of his master. Yet he moved his head uneasily from side to side, for from behind, growing louder every moment, came the sound of horsemen in pursuit. The Union men had been beaten. Excellent soldiers on a field of battle they were no match for the Texans in a hand-to-hand fight. As one of these said afterwards to a man he made prisoner, 'You'd have had a kind of show, Yank, if ye'd shot us first and warned us afterwards, but you ran your funerals the wrong way about.'

The presented arms of the soldiers made the Texans laugh, for with the quickness of cats they dodged aside, only two slightly wounded. Then came their turn and four Union men fell dead in as many seconds. The rest closed in bravely, but were overpowered, Bob Spenniker alone making his escape. The little scrimmage and its result put the Texans in such good humour that the excitement of Lieutenant Cunningham, as he threw himself on a horse and called upon them to pursue John, caused a burst of laughter and not a man stirred. The lieutenant was so incoherent in his rage and anxiety that it was some moments before he could make himself understood. But when at last he did so the men responded with a yell.

'This way,' one shouted; 'we'll be on the boy in two shakes. I saw him crawling off with his head hanging over the saddle-horn. We'll get that letter, lieutenant, if we've to ride through Sherman's lines.'

*(To be continued.)*

## THE FORTUNES OF THE GOBELINS.

---

THE French are an office-creating nation. They like to apply their governmental methods to the regulation of the arts, in spite of the disparaging conclusions which are drawn by nations whose artists are left to shift for themselves. 'Repression of genius,' 'Academic stereotype'—these are the phrases that are bandied about when the subject offers itself for discussion. But the French have a powerful if not a complete answer to the detractors of their system. They alone can point to a Government institution which has continued for 235 years as almost the sole exponent and supporter of an ancient art that without it could hardly be said to exist. High-warp tapestry, Gobelin tapestry, what other of the kind (*pace* the looms of William Morris) can there be said to exist in comparison with that famous fabric? Twice, at least, have the works of the Gobelins been proscribed and burnt to please a rabble. Nevertheless to-day the old manufactory named after the dyers in scarlet, whose brilliant hue was popularly ascribed, if not to the efficacy of the little stream of the Bièvre, to something more strangely recondite, flourishes almost as of old.

Perhaps the Gobelins is the exceptional foster-child which proves the rule that officialism kills art. If so, it is so great an exception as almost to justify the system. Nor was tapestry the sole end of its existence. When the far-seeing Colbert centralised in 1662 the tapestry manufactories of Paris, at the house named after the scarlet dyers, he had a much wider scheme in mind. It was embodied very soon in Louis XIV.'s letters patent announcing the existence in 1667 of the 'Manufacture Royale des meubles de la Couronne.' Skilled artists and workmen were to be brought from abroad to improve native taste and to co-operate in the beautification of the royal palaces with tapestries, gold and silver work, inlaying of woods and marbles—in a word, every kind of costly

decoration. Did Louis XIV. think of anything but his own glory? That is an open question. That Colbert had wider views there is no doubt, and he carried his point in spite of the manufacturers of Poitiers and Auxerre. Mazarin had said to Louis, 'Je vous dois tout, Sire, mais je crois m'acquitter en quelque sorte avec votre Majesté en lui donnant Colbert.' To Colbert, once a woollen-draper's apprentice, is due in great measure the wonderful outburst of artistic energy which made France the arbiter of European taste.

It seems a paradoxical state of things that, while history tells us a long tale of sumptuary laws against private luxury, which could not be enforced, kings should support institutions devoted to the fostering of magnificence. In the very futility of these oft-enacted sumptuary edicts, says M. Havard in his great book, '*Les Manufactures Nationales*,' the explanation is to be found. If private persons will transgress laws against undue expenditure, kings must not be behindhand. Louis XI., with his ostentatious plainness, is almost the only exception in the history of France. Louis XIV. was not afflicted with that failing, any more than were François I., Henri II., or Henri IV. Kings must outvie the splendour of individuals for their own credit's sake.

With Colbert and Louis XIV. the movement took the form of a centralisation of arts and crafts at the Hôtel des Gobelins. Would this have succeeded if fortune had not supplied the very man to be its ruling spirit? Who knows? But Charles le Brun, *premier peintre du Roi*, was there to solve the problem. It required, says our historian, a man of universal ability in every point of art, and of a special knowledge of each branch, to inspire and direct an establishment employing so many artistic industries, so many varied professions. That all efforts might converge to an unique result by the amalgamation of talents so different in origin and description, a man was wanted of singular influence to rule a whole world of artists, *genus irritabile*—men of merit, full of ambition, self-love, and professional jealousy. Le Brun had every assistance to support his prestige. The title of *premier peintre* was backed by an ample pension and letters of nobility. The result justified its contriver. Le Brun painted 'great machines,' it is true, but he was an indefatigable producer, with a sense of decoration, and a power of bending collaborators to his will. This had been one secret of the wonderful production of the period

of the Renaissance, this system which British artists, who live suspiciously apart, have seldom possessed. Le Brun was a giant. He gave designs, or at least the first idea, for everything. His drawings were innumerable; and such painters and designers as Van der Meulen, Nicholas Loir, Gérard Audran, Bérain, and Le Pautre, with sculptors such as Coysevox and Tubi, were content to work under his sole direction.

A veritable happy family were they in those days at the Gobelins! Caffieri, the elder sculptor from Italy, marries in 1665 Françoise de Beauvallon, the cousin-german of Le Brun. Domenico Cucci, another sculptor, Le Brun, and Jean Jans, the great *tapissier*, are the witnesses of his marriage. The sculptor Legeret marries the daughter of the painter Yvart. Tubi marries one niece of Le Brun's wife, Verdier the other—to mention but a few of the inter-marriages in this nest of artists which were celebrated 'by dozens.' This explains in part 'the astonishing unity which one finds in the work of this prolific centre.' 'One artistic success makes fifty artists proud; one birth touches ten families; while a death puts a whole colony in mourning. Why be astonished at the common inspiration?' And all this led to the formation of a Style, which is the most difficult thing in the world to invent, as in our late Victorian attempts at decorative art—the 'art movement,' as our enthusiasts are pleased to call it—we find to our sorrow.

Royal visits are not wanting to make the Gobelins the fashion. From 1663–1667 every year the great Louis comes to see how his 'Manufactures Royales' progress; and in the tapestry designed by Le Brun, still to be seen in the museum of the Gobelins, his visits are recorded. Therein are depicted all the various artistic objects that the nation can produce. Foreign princes and ambassadors visit it as a matter of course, and receive presents of tapestry, which tend to make for the Gobelins an European reputation. This is the golden age of the Gobelins—the victorious palace-building age of Louis XIV.

But evil days are coming. The wars of Louis press heavy on his purse. To the Mint with all the silver furniture which has taken the place of common wood! 'Le Grand Roi s'étonna,' says Voltaire, 'que les six millions employés à meubler Versailles ne lui rendissent que la moitié de cette somme.' The melting lasted from December 9, 1689, to May 19, 1690. What good was it to keep gold and silver-

smiths at the Gobelins if their beautiful work is condemned to irremediable destruction? The great Boulle at the Louvre has to replace the silver tables and mirrors with his magnificent, though less costly, furniture in tortoiseshell and brass. So it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. The tendency at the Gobelins is gradually to neglect the arts of metal and furniture, and to confine itself to tapestry. Though as late as 1784 there is still a staff of smiths and cabinet-makers, the era of those fine works requiring the co-operation of the goldsmith, the inlayer, the sculptor, the gilder, and the lapidary, has passed away. At the death of the great king, 'la coquetterie avait remplacé la sumptuosité et un besoin d'élégance s'était substitué à l'amour du grandiose.'

It is curious, says M. Havard, that tapestry, the earliest of the arts of decorative furnishing, should at the Gobelins outlive the rest. The pictured tapestries of Le Brun and his successors are a very different thing from those of Arras and the other centres of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The earliest were made when decorative luxury was little understood. Wealthy nobles travelling from one castle to another carried in the huge unwieldy chests which served also perhaps as tables, the hangings that were to clothe the nakedness of their bare, stone-vaulted chambers. These were hung loose; the rusty iron hooks for suspending them are said still to exist in some old French châteaux. No effort was then made to display spread out flat a picture copied in the woof, which in tapestry completely hides the upright threads of the warp. The figures in these old tapestries are scattered at random over the surface, and sometimes placed in tiers above each other's heads, with a fine disdain, or rather an ignorance, of perspective laws. The craftsman is content if he can make a pattern with a balance of brilliant though arbitrary hues to insure a good effect whichever part of his hanging is displayed.

With the Renaissance changes creep in. The influence of Italian painting is soon felt. Raphael—are not his cartoons for tapestry to be seen by us all at South Kensington to-day?—is the first great painter to think more of his own art than the exigencies of the medium into which it is to be translated. It is a momentous crisis for tapestry. With Raphael are broadened the ornamental borders, and filled with all foliations and grotesques that the Renaissance has borrowed and adapted

from the Antique. Our eyes can no longer avoid this border. It is becoming perilously like a frame to a centre which, though decoratively arranged, is rapidly becoming a picture. The more this insidious idea makes way, that the tapestry should imitate the painting, the greater is the demand for multiplicity of colours and shades to reproduce the artist's modelling. The old *tapisseries* were content with perhaps twenty colours, but they were reliable and 'fast.' The time was to come when, with thousands to choose from, the tapestry maker, compelled by the painter to overstep the limits of his art, was to waste himself in copying pictures in pale tones which could not endure.

How this great question was debated and quarrelled over at the Gobelins, how politics and Court intrigue and personal ends affected the stately art we shall shortly see. First came the downfall of Colbert. Louvois was the merciless rival who supplanted him, and Louvois knew nothing about art. Writing in 1682 to a connoisseur in Italy who was to send him statues for the decoration of Meudon, 'I am not a connoisseur,' he says; 'that is to say I am not well versed either in painting or statues. . . . I beg you will spare my purse in the matter of sculpture; and though I do not want it thoroughly bad, I wish you not to go hunting for an extreme beauty which may make it considerably more expensive.' After this it is not surprising that the only personal trace of him at the Gobelins is the edict for melting down the gold and silver plate in 1689. He could show an unrelenting animosity not only towards Colbert, but also towards his *protégé*. Le Brun, the great decorative artist, was replaced by old Mignard, the careful portraitist, but Louvois's resentment pursued Le Brun even after death. All the designs he made for the Gobelins were confiscated, and even the work he did before he served the King, and the drawings he bought in his youth, were robbed from his widow. In vain did she implore Louvois to leave her the first idea for the 'Nativity,' which was a present from Le Brun to his wife, who trusted 'that the goodness of Monseigneur will not deprive her of that consolation.' Vain hope! The memorial is curtly marked 'Monseigneur de Louvoi (*sic*) ne veut rien accorder du présent mémoire—à Versailles ce 19 Novembre, 1690.' Louvois did not long survive his triumph. On July 16, 1691, he died, and in 1695 the respectable Mignard, his favoured artist,

followed him. It was a sad time for the tapestry workers. In 1685 the use of gold and silver thread had been discontinued. Next they had lost their great head, and now for four years, until the Peace of Ryswick, in 1697, they were deprived of their occupation. Mansart, the architect, was ousted in 1708, when Louis became for a time his own Surveyor of the Buildings. The next was the Duc d'Antin, the only legitimate son of Madame de Montespan. We shall see presently how ladies of this class could influence art.

D'Antin was an adept at pleasing every one. His only aim was to secure his own position, and he prided himself, whatever *contretemps* occurred, on showing never a sign of perturbation. Robert de Cotte, the clever architect whose genius guided the change of style from the grandiose apartments of Louis the 'Great,' to the boudoirs of his successor, the 'Well-beloved,' was the actual head of the Gobelins. The visit of Peter the Great made its affairs look brighter. On May 12, 1717, the Russian ship-builder came at half-past seven in the morning. Every court of the old Hôtel was hung double with tapestries, and by an arrangement of pulleys, when the monarch had passed through, the scene was changed, and a new series was spread for his return. He stayed nearly five hours, and such was the interest he took in everything that he repeated his visit on the 15th of June. The Court was astonished that the Czar refused all presents in the precious metals. Whatever was he waiting for, then? Why, tapestries of course, was the bright idea, d'Antin's perhaps; and so they gave him four from the series of the New Testament, to his huge delight. He made a doubtful return in taking away with him to Russia some of the Gobelins workmen—those workmen whom it takes fifteen years to train!

Till 1736 d'Antin preserved the position so valued because it brought its occupant so near the King. A controller of finance, Philibert Orry, succeeded the first nobleman who had been Surveyor of the Buildings. During his term of office the celebrated tapestries of the Story of Esther and of Jason and the Golden Fleece were made from the designs of de Troy. So popular were these that they were repeated over and over again. Both sets are to be seen at Windsor Castle, and both betray in their lighter tones that fatal failure of the dye. If ever you see them, look at the tapestry with the motto 'Solutus Mardocheus non flectebat genua.' 'Mordecai refuses to bow

the knee to Haman, for, in the tapestry, he is obviously priding himself that his great toe is placed on the outside of his foot in most unique anatomy. Both sets have also that imitation of a picture frame in thread which French critics justly characterise as 'une grosse erreur,' or 'a deplorable innovation.'

The manufactory of the Gobelins was about to fall on more evil days when Orry lost his place for displeasing Madame de Pompadour in a little matter of finance. Perhaps that was but a pretext, and he was bound to go, for Madame had her own personal and family ends to serve. At Court you cannot despise even the influence that may serve to get for your friend a keepership of the back-stairs. Had not the Surveyor of the Buildings the power secretly to oblige or disoblige every courtier who had a lodging at Versailles, every guest invited to Fontainebleau, to Saint Germain, to Marly, or Compiègne? So the new chief is M. le Normant de Tournhem; and who is he? The uncle of M. d'Etiolles, who was the husband of Madame de Pompadour herself. There is a *quid pro quo*—something for the lady in the shape of the estate of Crecy given to her in 1746, which cost more than a million livres, and brought in a yearly income of 25,000.

In spite of the comparative neglect of tapestry compared with the golden days of Louis XIV. and Le Brun, the Gobelins could survive if only it were left alone. But Madame has artistic ideas and, in consequence, a favourite artist. Oudry has been favoured by the Queen, who has even copied his pictures, but it is much more to the point that he is patronised by the mistress of the King. There must be something very fascinating about this popular artist to be able to please such opposing forces. Fascinating or not, he sets the Gobelins by the ears, and it all arises from that vexed question of painting *versus* tapestry. The *entrepreneurs*, or contractors, are three skilled *tapisseries*, who think, with reason, that they understand the requirements of their art. They are disinclined to abandon their limited palette of reliable colours and copy all the tones of M. Oudry's pictures. It will completely change 'the conditions of their labour, making it more delicate, more lengthy, more difficult, and less remunerative.' They had right on their side, for did they not agree as to price for each piece with the Crown beforehand? If the cost of labour is to be so increased, can they make any profit after



they have paid the workmen? The Crown is heavily in debt to them already, and the position of *entrepreneur*, like Shakespeare on the stage at about the same time, spells ruin. That is not Oudry's affair. His 'Chasses de Louis XV.,' the natural successors of Le Brun's 'Histoire du Roi Louis XIV.'—representing the pleasures of Le Bien Aimé instead of the heroic exploits of 'Le Roi Soleil'—had been wonderfully reproduced, it was true; but he wished them to do better still. He replies that for the colour of pictures is being substituted the so-called colouring of tapestry, and the painter subordinated to the craftsman. 'Tous les artistes,' he writes in a rage to Tournehem, 'se sont trouvés éconduits par l'ouvrier sur des prétendues raisons de fabrique.' But these were not fanciful reasons, and the reply of the *entrepreneurs* is very much to the point. 'To paint well,' they say, 'and to cause tapestries to be well executed are two absolutely different things. It is no good using terms of painting to tapestry makers. You must speak to them in terms of tapestry-making, which they understand, and with knowledge of your subject. It is for us to employ those terms to them, while we make use of the opinion of the painter whose pictures we are interpreting.' That is plain speaking enough, but the contractors go on to argue *ad hominem*. The old tapestries of the Crown, they said, in vigorous saturated colours, had resisted the effects of air and time. Of late at Beauvais tapestries had been executed under the immediate direction of the Sieur Oudry. 'What are they to-day? How old do they look after a trifle of six years?'

Then Oudry has his turn. On the borders of this memorial addressed to Tournehem the painter asks 'if the least workman of the Gobelins knows more than the Sieur Oudry, how is it that the manufactory of the Gobelins produces so many pitiable things which make the painters sick?' The *entrepreneurs* make a very practical reply. They simply absent themselves when Oudry comes as inspector to give his suggestions, and it requires a formal admonishment from the Surveyor of the Buildings to bring them back.

The latter died in 1751 and Oudry in 1755. Poisson, younger brother of Madame de Pompadour, had the reversion of the office of Uncle Tournehem. Disgraceful nepotism, no doubt; but the result might have been much worse. Madame the artistically inclined has had the decency to see to it that

her brother shall know something at least about art. In 1749 she sent him 'to form his taste in Italy,' as d'Argenson puts it, 'in order that he may make us fine things in France.' He took with him, on his grand tour, a whole suite of draughtsmen and people that might be useful for the great emprise of forming a taste. Paris laughed and wrote 'Poissonades.' He drops the name of Poisson as unsuitable, or perhaps Madame drops it for him, and has him called 'de Vandières.' But the wits are merciless, and 'Monsieur le Marquis d'Avant-Hier' is he dubbed forthwith. Another effort, then! Known in future as the Marquis de Marigny, he is not the worst arbiter of the fortunes of the Gobelins. We must pass lightly over the fact that he gave them Boucher in the place of Oudry—Boucher whose wonderful decorative attractiveness led the *tapisseries* on insensibly in the inevitable path, in which it is true Le Brun had walked some way, of imitating paint. The tide of tapestry technique had set that way. In 1763, at the Salon, the actual tapestries were exhibited alongside of the pictures they reproduced, and it was not Marigny's fault if the ideas of Oudry were to impose themselves on the *entrepreneurs* Audran, Neilson, Cozette, and the rest. Marigny died in 1781 and was followed by a bankrupt Abbé Terray, an unfortunate selection, whose inglorious career did not last long. 'Affreusement discrédité dans le public, traité de voleur et de scélérat dans tous les pamphlets du temps,' he was obliged to give place to the Comte d'Angiviller when Louis XVI. became king. The former did his best to interest Louis and Marie Antoinette in the Gobelins, but they were more taken up with the cabinet-maker Riesener and his clever rivals, and gave but a platonic approval to the tapestries submitted to them by poor Cozette. English noblemen did something to help, avoiding the Customs duty of at least a quarter of the value by the aid of such intermediaries as the French ambassador. Then came the rupture with England, and that promising avenue was closed.

Politics, which were so influential from without upon the Gobelins, were about to find their way inside. The sinister figure of the 'patriot' Marat looms up. In his precious 'Ami du Peuple' he attacks the Government manufactories. Sèvres, he says, costs 200,000 francs a year, for a few services of porcelain which the king gives as presents to the ambassadors. The Gobelins costs 300,000, for the 'Patriot' hardly knows what, except to enrich *des fripons et des intrigants*. Twenty-

five workmen are usually kept there, he asserts, 'who employ altogether about twelve livres' worth of silk on a tapestry which is sometimes fifteen years in the making.' Of course he was lying. The most elaborate tapestry took but three years; there were 116 workmen; and they did not cost nearly 300,000 francs. But any revolutionary stick was good enough to beat a royal dog with, and Roland, the minister, not to be behindhand, proposes to reduce all the national manufactories to the level of industrial concerns. He sends away the three painters and the dye chemist to begin with. The art school established by Mignard had been closed before, and Audran, who had replaced the excellent Guillaumet as chief inspector, is soon accused of the fatal crime of 'Incivism.' Belle, put in his place, will not fall under that imputation! He always appears dressed in the Carmagnole and has inscribed over the doors of the workshops, 'Ici on se Tutoye!' He is nothing if not thorough. Nine days after his appointment, on November 13, 1793, he asks the Minister of the Interior for leave to plant in the courtyard a tree of Liberty. He proposes to burn at the foot of that tree—whose leaves one would think will be a little shrivelled in the process, if it was not a wizened thing in its original conception—all tapestries adorned with fleur de lis, royal monograms, and ci-devant arms of France. This holocaust is to be in honour of the 'martyrs' Marat—the thief who began his career of atrocious crime by stealing medals at Oxford—and Lepeletier the coward, who, to save his money and his skin, voted for the death of the king to whom he had gone out of his way to swear fidelity in 1789. Nearly all the tapestries bore the royal arms, but the minister acquiesced. Proud of his success, Belle headed a deputation of the Gobelin workmen—poor unwilling wretches, most of them anxious, no doubt, only to live and let live—to the bar of the Convention. There they swore solemnly to consecrate their talents to 'the transmittal to posterity of the portraits of the heroes and martyrs of liberty, and of the memorable actions of regenerate and republican Frenchmen!' The Convention are invited to the bonfire. They send citizens Dupuy and Boucher, in whose presence, on November 30, 1793, at nine o'clock in the morning, is burnt a good amount of tapestries, including an example of the Visit of Louis XIV. to the Gobelins.

By hook or crook the minister Paré (all honour to his

name ! ) saved the Gobelins from the fate proposed—perhaps against his will—by Roland. He reduced the output, but kept up the standard of excellence. To send away the unfortunate *tapissiers* would be, he said, ‘to intercept the tradition or succession of rare and precious talents.’ Honest or otherwise, these good republicans are nothing if not bombastic ! Meantime for these workmen and their ‘civism,’ which was supposed to desire nothing better than the task of reproducing the portraits of Marat and Lepeletier, work must be found. In May, 1794, the Convention decreed that ‘Il sera fait incessamment sous le surveillance de David des copies soignées des tableaux de Marat et Lepeletier pour être remises a cette manufacture et y être exécutées.’ Patience, poor workmen, and you shall soon arrive at the summit of your ambition ! The head of the leprous Marat with the dirty cloth tied round it will look well empanelled in a drawing-room !

In July a jury is decreed to weed out ‘uncivic’ subjects. On September 10, 1794, they go to work for fifteen days. The ‘Siege of Calais’ after Barthélemy is rejected ‘because the pardon to the citizens of Calais is only extorted by the tears and supplications of a queen and the sons of a tyrant.’ Cleopatra at the tomb of Antony is simply marked ‘immoral’ ! One hundred and thirty-six paintings are rejected ; only about twenty pass muster. New models are wanted, and the conditions of competition are that ‘il faut plaire a l’esprit, et l’instruire, charmer les yeux (that will be easy with Marat’s head to feast on) respecter les mœurs et la sévérité des principes républicains.’ It is not so easy to do all this when artists in general, and the craftsmen of the Gobelins in particular, are starving and in rags : when the price of a shirt is two hundred francs and the wages are paid in worthless assignats. A bitter cry goes up, and in 1795 the salaries (in assignats) are in some cases multiplied by eight. But even that is useless. In 1797 the *tapissiers* are selling the very sheets from off their beds, while the Government is paying in tapestries for a cargo of corn.

The longest lane has a turning. Belle, the model ‘civist’ and idiot, is turned out. Audran is replaced and dies. The good Guillaumet comes back, and pulls the manufactory through its troubles. The workmen are spared the ignominy—or, say, balked of their ambition—of reproducing the portrait of Marat. He lies now under his deserved infamy.

The foul carcase that received a theatrical funeral was, on November 8, 1795, cast out of the Pantheon. With the rise of Napoleon the palaces must be refurnished, and the Gobelins is saved.

David, the clever painter but stupid republican, with a bee in his bonnet, receives a long-deserved rebuke. He who, with Oudry, shares the chief responsibility of making tapestry the mere imitation of painting, expects under the Empire to ape Le Brun. 'No,' drily answers the Lieutenant-General, 'Le Brun owed the divers exceptional prerogatives granted to him for his exceptional talents ;' and David has to put up with the well-merited snub.

In 1815-16, under the Comte de Pradel, there was another holocaust of Napoleonic tapestries. In 1848 the vexed question of the utility of State manufactories is again debated. Painters preponderate upon the Commission, and tapestry is still the slave of painting. Portraits in thread are their ideas of tapestry decoration. Then comes another fall and another crisis. In 1870, while the Gobelins itself is turned into a hospital, provision dépôt, and powder magazine, nearly all its workmen are bravely fighting at the advanced posts.

The Commune decrees it once more no longer a State department. On May 23rd the Versailles army is approaching. The leaders of the Commune turn out all the remaining employés under a hail of bullets. Heaping up the exhibition-room with all the tapestries and stuffs, all the military records and compromising papers that they can get together, they set fire to it with shouts of 'Vive La Commune !' Then they leave, except one fanatic who expects to fire the magazine when he has got the Versailles army inside ! A bullet through the head gives him his quietus. The devoted workmen return and bring out the hand-engine, which they have hidden for fear the Communards should use it to throw petroleum. They do their utmost to fight the flames, but half the place, including three-and-seventy tapestries, is burnt.

Wonderful, however, is its vitality ! By June, 1871, it has opened its doors again, and the quiet existence of a more peaceful time, and under better decorative principles, continues to this day. 'The great family of craftsmen continues to practise an art special to France.' 'Through all social upheavals, political revolutions, economic and industrial trans-

formations, it transmits continuously to the generations that succeed one another in this old Hôtel, the passion for the craft and the taste for a quiet life, secluded and unassuming.' So you may see them to-day in the quiet factory, with its pleasant garden, which was founded on the banks of the Bièvre.

FREDERICK S. ROBINSON.

*BLIND MAN'S HOLIDAY.*

THE mid-June cuckoo's stammering frequent cry  
 With jocund sound the startled silence mocks,  
 Belated bees with drowsy wings hum by,  
 Sweet-laden from the white and crimson stocks ;  
 Anon the bleating of the folded flocks  
 Comes to me on the Summer-scented breeze,  
 All heavy-fragrant from the linden trees.

Dusk-loving moths shake out their wings of down,  
 And waken'd bats flit round with doleful squeak ;  
 The cockchafer, a clumsy country clown,  
 Lurches against the unwary passer's cheek,  
 And from the wither'd elm beside the creek  
 A white owl sails, as silent as a dream,  
 And lazy fish rise in the sleeping stream.

The stars look out, the moon, a sickle pale,  
 Low near the west horizon tilted lies,  
 Mysterious shadows blacken in the vale,  
 And o'er the marsh the breath of evening sighs ;  
 The cricket, with his shrill, persistent cries,  
 Now close at hand, now far along the hedge,  
 Answers the bull-frog croaking in the sedge.

And all is peaceful. From the cottage eaves  
 The mellow lights die out by one and one,  
 The dew descends upon the whispering leaves,  
 Spangling the hammocks for the faeries spun  
 By ever-active spiders—Day is done ;  
 Fair, silent Night walks forth with open hand  
 To scatter blessings on the slumb'ring land.

## *SOME CELTIC LOVE-SONGS.*

---

‘Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.’

IT has been remarked with some appropriateness that the songs of a nation's youth are love-lyrics. Taking as the youth of England the productive period of the sixteenth century, and dating that period from the renaissance which followed Caxton and his invention, there is an obvious putting away of childish things—of fable, tale, and legend—and an awakening of fancy, of passion, of romance. As childhood is the period of story and fable, of *Canterbury Tales* and *Piers Plowman's* vision, so youth fittingly breathes forth love, and glows with passion. Manhood chants songs of patriotism and prowess, and, as the patriotic follows the romantic, so the philosophical succeeds the patriotic. In the nation's middle age, when peace is won, and enterprise achieved, even the minstrel's song savours of ‘sententious reasoning, grave, subtle, and condensed.’ In ‘the spacious days of great Elizabeth’ English poetry passed from youth to adolescence. In a somewhat similar manner, England's greatest poet passed from his ‘*Venus and Adonis*,’ through the *Historical Plays*, to ‘*The Tempest*.’ In Elizabeth's earlier days we have a lyrical outburst from a band of singers, among whom are numbered Spenser and Marlowe, Sidney and Ben Jonson, Drummond, and Constable.

The love-songs of Ireland cannot be thus located in her national history. We have only fragments—scattered gems once set in the shrine of ‘the olden golden tongue,’ and now preserved in the silver of an alien speech—such echoes of the broken melodies as translations, generally inadequate, and frequently faulty, may recall. But Celtic love-songs are not songs of youth, gay and careless. They seem as if sung at the first with a quivering lip and brimming eyes. Perchance, the singer sang to some Rosaleen or Kathleen, with ‘cheeks like heath flowers by the fountain, and breast like downy *Cenabawn*’ (bog-cotton), who was as tangible as she was fair;



but he sang with eyes gazing out into his native mountain-mist towards the shadowy and illusive form of another '*Kathaleen ni-Houlahan*,' another '*Rose gheal-dubh*,' a greater and a best-beloved, his devotion to whom he must needs express indirectly. In these songs the patriotism of manhood is indistinguishably interwoven with the romance of youth. The mistress, whose honour must be upheld, whose foes must be fought, whose wrongs must be avenged, and whose tears must be wiped with wistful tenderness, is identical with the fair Woman-land of Eire, whose very rivers and hills and lush meadows are precious and praiseworthy.

'There is honey in the trees where her misty vales expand,  
And her forest paths in summer are by falling waters fanned,  
There is dew at high noon-tide there; and springs i' the yellow sand,  
On the fair hills of Virgin Ireland.'

Take, for example, the old Irish song, '*Róisín Dubh*,' and, in passing, compare it with the corresponding work of the Elizabethan Amourists, with their literary conceits, their artificial sentiment, their studied charm. This, too, was composed during the reign of the Virgin Queen, and it celebrates the devotion of Red Hugh O'Donel of Tyrconnell. No maiden need desire hotter love words than the original of this poem, yet throughout it runs a strain which tells of the soldier's toils, sufferings, and wanderings; it is full of national melancholy and hopeless eagerness; it is allegorical in every line; and its prevailing tone seems to be that of the warrior's agony at the very thought of his 'little black rose' in a rival's embrace.

'There's no flower that e'er bloomed can my rose excel,  
There's no tongue that e'er moved half my love can tell.  
Had I strength, had I skill, the wide world to subdue,  
O! the Queen of that wide world should be *Róisín Dubh*.'

'The mountains, high and misty, through the moors must go;  
The rivers shall run backwards, and the lakes o'erflow;  
And the wild waves of old ocean wear a crimson hue,  
Ere the world sees the ruin of my *Róisín Dubh*.'

The same spirit inspires a very exquisite and delicate Irish lyric, '*Chaitilin ni Uallacháin*,' or '*Kathaleen-ni-Houlahan*,' to spell phonetically one of Erin's emblematical names. It is supposed to have been composed by a harper, William Dall (blind) Hefferman, early in the eighteenth century, and it has

been well translated by James Clarence Mangan. Here, again, it is the dear Woman-country which is in the singer's mind, as he sings of a bridal with 'the King's son.' No doubt the reference is a Jacobite one, and the Pretender is the 'King's son,' awaited as 'the young Deliverer of *Kathaleen-ni-Houlahan*.' Yet after all the years, few more touching prayers could be offered up for the dear Virgin-land, which has 'suffered many things of many physicians,' than the concluding lines—

'Young she is, and fair she is, and would be crowned a queen,  
Were the King's son at home here with *Kathaleen-ni-Houlahan*.

'Let us pray to Him who holds life's issues in His hands,—  
Him who formed the mighty globe, with all its thousand lands ;  
Girdling them with seas and mountains, rivers deep, and strands,  
To show forth His might in saving *Kathaleen-ni-Houlahan*.'

The same Jacobite reference permeates, and seems to date, the old song, '*Pastheen Fion*,' with its directness, its primitive passion, and its breath of Nature at her springtide. It is translated by Sir Samuel Ferguson.

'O, my *Pastheen Fion* is my heart's delight,  
Her gay heart laughs in her blue eyes bright ;  
Like the apple-blossom is her bosom white,  
And her neck like the swan's on a March morn bright,

'Then, Oro, come with me, brown girl sweet,  
And O I would go through the snow and sleet,  
If you would come with me, brown girl sweet.'

So runs the refrain. There is the same fresh simpleness in Sir S. Ferguson's translation of '*The Coolun*'; the air, at least, of which has been handed down from one old harper to another from days which probably preceded those of Elizabeth, and which may still be heard rising across Irish furrows, or from the girl at her milking-pail. The last verses are composed of reminiscences. It is in the first lines that the singer tells of the *Coolun*—literally 'her of the fair flowing locks'—

'Walking down by the cuckoo's street,  
With the dew of the meadows shining  
On her milk-white twinkling feet.'

Celtic love-songs are almost invariably distinguished by this simple directness, and this appreciative comparison with Nature. They are songs sung near Nature's heart, and as

such are 'racy of the soil.' The Celtic lover does not compare his lady's teeth to pearls, but rather to 'the crescent moon's tip,' her skin is neither like satin, marble, nor alabaster, but is 'sleek as a butterfly's wing,' or it is tinted like—

'A dish of fresh strawberries smothered in cream.'

When he sings the charms of some treacherous '*Mairgreadh-ni-Chealleadh*,'—the beautiful mistress of O'Keefe, the famous outlaw, who, tempted by English reward, betrayed her lover in the days of William III., and was stabbed to the heart by him before his arrest—he compares the neck of the 'lost maiden' to the white fluttering bog cotton. When he tells of bewitching 'O'Donovan's Daughter,' he likens 'cheek, eye, and lip' to 'the glistening ripe monadan' (a red creeping bog-plant), the black whortle-berry of the Galtee Mountains, and 'the Cenabawn, as it waves by the wells of Blackwater.' And while referring to this simplicity and fresh naturalness, which likens these old lyrics, even when heard imperfectly through their translations, to the songs of birds among the apple-blossom on some cowslip-scented spring morning, it is almost impossible to refrain from quoting one example of comparatively recent date. In the poem '*Ma Cáilin donn*' ('My brown-haired girl'), by Dr. George Sigerson, there is this directness and this charm, with a daintiness and a freshness which likens the coming of 'the nut-brown mayde' to the very progress of the spirit of Springtide herself. The lines ring like joy-bells, until we too seem to see the coming of the well-beloved, whose footprints over the bending, red-tipped daisies, 'leave the meadows rosy.' We too seem to see with a lover's eyes how—

'The blush is on the flower, and the bloom is on the tree,  
And the bonnie, bonnie blythe birds are caroling their glee,  
And the dews upon the grass are made diamonds by the sun,  
All to deck a path of glory for *ma Cáilin donn*.'

'O Sycamore, O Sycamore, wave, wave your banners green,  
Let all your pennons flutter forth, O Beech! before my queen,  
Ring out, ring out, O Linden! your merry leafy bells,  
Unveil your brilliant torches, O Chestnut! to the dells!  
Ye fleet and honeyed breezes to kiss her hand ye run,  
But my heart has passed before ye to *ma Cáilin donn*!'

It has been already said that it is impossible to locate the love-songs of Ireland accurately in her literary history—a

history which is, alas, very scanty and interrupted. Much has been forgotten, much more has been most probably altogether lost, and more irrevocably so, as, each year, the Celtic tongue becomes less and less spoken. But a distinct era is marked by that burst of song, which had for its inspiration the subject of love and patriotism, and which appropriately marked that period of national literary activity which is remembered as the days of 'Young Ireland.' It was on October 15, 1842, that the first number of *The Nation* newspaper was published. Of the three men who founded it—Charles Gavan Duffy, John Dillon, and Thomas Davis, one—the last—must be accounted as the greatest of Irish song-writers, since Moore and his melodies are cosmopolitan rather than Celtic. From this paper, and the party which gathered round it, sprang up a new literary life for Ireland. Old stories were retold, old legends and traditions were recalled, and, above all, old poems and songs were translated—translated too, in some instances, by scholarly translators, and always by Irish of the Irish, the sons of the soil. Like Anteus of old, a fainting literary existence renewed its life and strength by a touch of Mother Earth. Celtic literature, poetry, and history took a new meaning, a new start, and although the rekindled fire has flickered, has burnt dim, and has at times seemed almost extinguished, yet it still glows, and the Celtic spirit warms and colours much that is best in English literature of to-day. Interest in Celtic song and story has been aroused, and there is much to sustain it. To those who study Irish music, poetry, or folk-lore there comes a speedy perception of the fact that the subject is a far fuller and wider one than they at first supposed. If interest be not lacking, neither is material lacking, and those who seek will find a strangely wild and wistful and, withal, a strangely unexpected fascination in the love-songs of the 'green Isle of the Sundown'—the world's '*Chusla Machree*.'

L. M. MCCRAITH.

*OFF THE HIGH ROAD:*

## THE STORY OF A SUMMER.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE, AUTHOR OF 'IN THE LION'S MOUTH,'  
'YOUNG DENYS,' 'MISS LATIMER OF BRYANS,' ETC.

## CHAPTER X.

## ONE AFTERNOON.

'Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring.'

SOME days passed before the young Squire appeared again at the Old Slang Farm. Then he came deliberately in broad, matter-of-fact daylight, dressed in a new suit of clothes, and looking like a worthy descendant of his long line of ancestors. By dint of hard exercise and hard thought he had persuaded himself that it was ridiculous to avoid Miss Viola Fairfax as if she had the plague—quite as ridiculous as to run after her and watch every movement like a silly boy. It must certainly appear both uncourteous and unfriendly to her mind—if she thought of it at all—that he should trouble himself to show her no further civility after their walk together that day.

He had repressed himself so sternly that he felt almost able to speak of her to his father—at least, to say frankly that he was going to the Farm, and to take the consequences. But Colonel Dampier gave him no opening; for he did not even look up from his work while the young man made some pretence of idling round the study before he went out. He called to him, however, just as he was shutting the door.

'Shall you be away long, Ned?'

'No, sir, I don't think so. Do you want me? I was going—'

'No, never mind. That's all,' said Colonel Dampier, as if a second thought had struck him. 'I want nothing. You can go.'

'Come along, Don ! Come along, old fellow !' said Edwin, as he made a short cut across the lawn.

But it was a cruel disappointment, after all those thoughts, all that self-repression, all that unusual care for outward appearance, to find Mrs. Downes alone.

There she was in her favourite old corner of the kitchen, the fire nearly out, a screen of tall green plants in the window. She was knitting as usual ; the local paper lay on the table beside her, just as it had lain on the day when she had taken Mr. Edwin into the confidence of her kind and anxious heart—the day when Jessie had gone on that quest to Manningham. That was more than a month ago now.

Mrs. Downes's bright eyes shone very pleasantly as she looked at her visitor. There was no need to be ashamed of the young master now, or to throw out dark hints of a necessary visit to London. To her eyes, at least, a tailor not so distant had done all that was necessary, and Mr. Edwin looked as a young gentleman ought to look.

She talked placidly for a few minutes, inquiring for the Colonel, touching on various local matters. If Edwin's answers were a little absent, she did not appear to notice it.

'You're quite a stranger, Mr. Edwin,' she said presently, with calm unconsciousness. 'You've never been to call on Miss Field. You've never been here at all since the morning after she came, except that night when you strayed into the garden.'

'No—I know I haven't,' Edwin murmured, flushing a little uncomfortably. 'But I—I've made her acquaintance, you know, Mrs. Downes. I walked back with her one day from Stepford Hill. It was Harry Holt's fault—he insisted on introducing us to each other.'

'I don't suppose you minded that much,' said Mrs. Downes.

'Of course not—except that she mightn't have liked it. Why should she want to know me ?'

'Still, as you walked home with her, and got on pretty well, as far as I can make out, it might have been more polite to come and call,' Mrs. Downes persisted.

'Well, I don't know,' said Edwin. His voice was now quite indifferent ; he looked almost bored as he sat, with downcast eyes, drawing a pattern on the floor with his stick.

How could dear old Downes be expected to understand the

ins and outs of it all—the cords that dragged him, the walls that were built in his way, the strong fight between will and reason that had lately been tearing him in pieces! Certainly he could not explain it; and yet—could she really have thought him unmannerly? and if she, some one else too?

‘Don’t you see, Mrs. Downes,’ he began, and he looked up for an instant with his old sweet smile, ‘if she—if Miss Field, I mean—had been some people, I would have come. But both you and she made out, remember, that she wished to be as quiet as possible. And being—what she is—of course one thought of her wishes first.’

Mrs. Downes smiled. The explanation was good as far as it went. ‘Yes, Mr. Edwin, you are right,’ she said; ‘and—it might set people talking if you came here much. I was only joking, bless you. Well, we weren’t so wrong in answering that advertisement, were we now?’

‘No, you were not so wrong,’ he answered, rather dreamily.

Mrs. Downes looked at him gravely, remembering Firkins’s remarks, of which Jessie had given her a much abridged edition. She had treated them with the cool contempt she always showed for the opinions of Mr. Locke and Mrs. Firkins; but yet they had not failed to give her some food for thought. And then that moonlight adventure; and now this evident and strange preoccupation. Could all this be the effect of one walk together? Mrs. Downes was troubled, she hardly knew why, and began to feel angry with herself for her small attempts at chaff. But Mr. Edwin—Mr. Edwin, so clear-headed and prudent—Mr. Edwin, always so lifted above local gossip by his utter indifference to any local attraction in the way of a pretty face! Mrs. Downes in her heart was coming near agreement with Firkins, her ancient foe; it was portentous.

She tried to go on talking of indifferent matters, but Edwin’s absence of mind and manner increased, though she was aware that he was listening intently for sounds from outside. There were none, however; no step but Hezekiah’s crossed the stones of the courtyard; and at last, after one or two silences, Edwin got up and held out his hand to Mrs. Downes.

‘I must go,’ he said. Then, half-way across the kitchen, he turned round, looking on the floor, his brown face much deepened in colour, and added quickly, ‘You said they were

out together, Mrs. Downes. Do you mind telling me which way they went ?'

'They went down to the river,' the old woman answered instantly.

Then she took, as she very rarely did, what seemed to her a great liberty. She followed him to the door, and detained him there with her hand upon his arm.

'Take care, Mr. Edwin dear, take care,' she said.

A flash of impatience crossed the young man's face ; he was almost angry, and yet he could not, even to himself, say that this was no business of hers. He was obliged to linger—to listen ; he could not look into her sweet old face, still less could he laugh the matter off lightly.

'Don't be angry with me,' she said. 'I've known you ever since you were a baby, and I've only known her a few weeks. She seems like perfection—Jessie thinks she is that—but if she was the means of bringing misfortune on you, or the least unhappiness, I would never forgive myself.'

'Don't be anxious, Mrs. Downes—how could she ?' Edwin answered gently. He laid his hand quite tenderly on hers, and unloosed her fingers from his sleeve. 'Anyhow, you are not responsible,' he said.

'Ah—but I am !' said Mrs. Downes ; but she was left alone to talk to the air, for he was gone ; he had taken the shortest cut by the yard wall down to the river meadows.

He soon came upon the two girls ; they had taken refuge in a shady place among the alders from the heat of the June day. When he reached them, Jessie had just risen, slowly and reluctantly, from her seat on the soft grass, and was explaining to her companion that she must go back to the house now ; there was a man coming about straw, and then there was the milking—but if Missy liked to stay here by the water, she would come back to fetch her by and by. Then Jessie, as she talked, saw a sudden lightening and softening in Missy's eyes, and her own brown eyes dilated with surprise and a little dismay when she turned her head and saw the young Squire.

However, there was nothing for it but to leave them together, especially as it must have been plain to the stupidest of people—which Jessie was not—that neither of them wished at that moment for anything better. She walked slowly and thoughtfully up the field and through the yards, and found her



mother standing at the kitchen door with a perplexed countenance.

'What have you done now, Jessie?' cried Mrs. Downes, almost sharply.

'I've left Missy down there on the bank, with somebody who can amuse her better than me,' Jessie answered with a grim smile. 'You sent him, mother, didn't you?'

'My word! But why didn't you stop along with them?'

'There was Smith coming over from Tarringford, who I wanted to see most particular, and then there was the milk; and I was just telling Missy that if she liked to stop where she was I'd come back for her towards tea-time. And then—I could see in her face she wanted a bit of amusement—then Mr. Edwin with his dog marches on the scene.'

'My word!' Mrs. Downes repeated. 'Well, you couldn't have done anything to please *him* better. If you had only seen him here just now,' and she gave a hasty sketch of Edwin's manner and what had passed.

'Do you know, Jessie, it seems perfectly ridiculous, but I do believe it's serious with him.'

'Well, mother, I see nothing ridiculous in it. To see him prowling about the garden that night was enough, I think. I'm sorry, but I'm sure I don't know what's to be done. We can't shut her up in a box, and we can't send him away for the summer.'

'Why are you sorry? Don't you think she is good enough for him? To be sure, we know nothing about her, and so I was saying to him just now.'

'Good enough! She's good enough for the emperor of all the world, if there was such a person,' Jessie answered coolly. 'When I say that, I'm not crying down Mr. Edwin, mother. He's a nice young fellow, and Stepford's a nice old place, and being so poor doesn't really matter. But I'm sorry, because I think he might as well cry for the moon. She likes him; she was ever so pleased to see him this afternoon. But it's just for the sake of variety—at least I think so. It wouldn't be likely that she'd go patiently all through the summer with no one to speak to but you and me.'

'Well!' sighed Mrs. Downes. 'There's Mr. Smith, Jessie. Get done with him as soon as you can, and go straight away back. Never mind the milk—that horrid Firkins was right so

far—it ain't the thing for those two to be philandering about alone together.'

In the meanwhile, after a little friendly talk under the alder shade, those two had strolled a few hundred yards up the stream, along a rough path under the spinney, much encumbered by briars, and here and there broken by deep holes and mud. Beyond the spinney, under the steep bank that fell from Colonel Dampier's garden wall, was a boat-house with a small boat, of which Edwin often made use for his excursions up and down and across the river. When he suggested to Viola that the day was not so hot now, and that she might not dislike a row down towards the bridge, she at once and joyfully consented.

'I have often told Jessie they ought to have a boat,' she said. 'I am so fond of rowing.'

'Why didn't she send for ours? But to-day you will let me row you, please.'

The cushions were up at the house, but he pulled his new coat off and laid it on the seat, rejoicing. Then he took the sculls and they glided off down the broad, quiet stream with its population of birds and fishes, here and there skirting a great bed of water-lilies, here and there winding carefully among banks of sand and pebbles. The cows in the low green meadows lifted their heads and gazed gently after them; the reeds and the alders rustled in a soft little western air that breathed over the water.

Viola was enchanting that afternoon. Even more than on their first walk together, she attracted Edwin and took possession of his heart by an exquisite, gentle friendliness, quite different from anything he had ever experienced in his life before. There was nothing of flirtation in that natural kindness and sweetness; there was nothing visible now of the capricious impatience, the touch of *hauteur*, which she had sometimes shown to Mrs. Downes and her faithful Jessie. And so it was far from being her lovely face alone which each moment made her conquest more complete. As she listened, with an absorbed interest that was perfectly fascinating, to the young man's confidences on the difficulties of Stepford—somehow Edwin felt as if the fact of telling her these difficulties must put an end to them—the time slipped away and they were nearing the bridge before either he or she was aware of it.

The river widened out into a broad, shining pool ; the banks were flat and bare ; on the road which crossed the bridge a solitary man was walking, and he stopped to look at the boat coming swiftly down stream.

'Is that the high road ? I believe it is, and you are taking me into danger,' said Viola, leaning forward.

'Oh, no ; what danger can there be ? You are with me ; you are all right,' Edwin said, with a smiling look.

He could let no fears break in on the happiest hour his lonely young life had ever known.

She answered his look with a smile, and stooped to stroke old Don's head as he lay quite still at her feet ; he was accustomed to boating with his master.

'We ought to go back soon,' she said. 'Jessie will wonder——'

'Not yet. I want to show you Tarringford, round the next bend in the river. It is really pretty. Miss Jessie knows I shall take care of you.'

'Mr. Dampier,' she said, very low, and still stooping towards the dog, 'who is that on the bridge ?'

Edwin started and looked round. They were nearly under the arch now. Old Don lifted his head and growled, in spite of the hand that was caressing him. The man on the bridge, looking over the parapet, flourished his hat with a friendly air.

'How do, Mr. Dampier ! Good afternoon, Miss Field ! Taking advantage of this lovely day ?'

It was Mr. Joseph Arnold.

'Splendid, isn't it !' Edwin called out in answer. Viola bowed silently.

They shot the arch immediately, and did not speak again till the swift current and Edwin's strong arms had carried them well out of hearing from the bridge. Mr. Arnold crossed it, and watched them from the other side till they were hidden from his sight by a clump of alder bushes. Then he went on his way, whistling.

'No ; I hope you won't sell nice old Stepford to Mr. Arnold,' said Viola.

'I told my father I would rather die on the doorstep,' said Edwin.

He laughed, a little ashamed of himself.

'I am sure he must have agreed with you.'

'I don't know. He seemed to think there might be such a

thing as necessity. Of course it might be madness to stick to a place if you couldn't afford to keep the roof water-tight. But no necessity could compel one to sell to Arnold, I think. He is the sort of man who would be hard on the tenants—exact his pound of flesh.'

'One of those self-made men who forget that God made them first,' said Viola. 'Yet we are hard upon him, perhaps. He can't help being vulgar. I should not mind what he was, if only he were not engaged to Jessie.'

'I've always rebelled against that. But we are hard upon him, in a way. He is straightforward, I believe; certainly clever, and not an ill-natured chap, when you don't owe him money. Ambitious—but my father says that does him honour.'

'Yes; better be ambitious than grind on in the same groove for ever; and such a groove—a country town!'

'Or a country village? That is cruel of you,' Edwin said, and he met her eyes with a smile that was half pathetic.

She blushed a little. 'I meant nothing of the kind,' she said quietly.

'You see,' he went on hurriedly, 'it is the story of the Sleeping Beauty upside down, wrong side out—quite different, in fact. It's a poor sort of a lout asleep among briars, and a wonderful fairy princess from somewhere beyond the stars who looks in and wakes him. Or something like the moon and—but I had better not venture among the classics. Besides—I beg your pardon—it isn't that at all. But to finish—the briars are too thick; the poor wretch opens his eyes and looks, but he can't get out anyhow. The story ought to end by sending him out into the world to fight things for her—a nice kind of ambition that would be—but what's the use of inventing? He goes about carrying muddy fields on his boots, as I did when I first saw you, and fenced in with bramble hedges for ever.'

'I know—I know all about it,' the girl said. Her eyes were very grave and thoughtful, but her mouth was smiling, as she leaned down and drew her fingers lightly, like a child, along the water that rippled musically. 'I tell you, I meant nothing of the kind. Your story is all wrong. He—the prince—is kept where he is by duty and unselfishness. The will-o'-the-wisp who comes and flits before him, is—a will-o'-the-wisp—selfish, irresponsible. She calls him to nothing better. But I

will say this for her—she does *not* wish him to share the ambitions of Mr. Arnold. Now let us leave off talking nonsense. I want you to tell me what your father did in India in the old days—before he began to write that great book.’

Edwin was proud of his father, and always glad to talk about him. It was an exquisite pleasure, too, to obey her, to follow the smallest signs of her inclination towards one subject or another. He had an heroic story to tell, though he knew little of its details, and he did not then understand the special interest with which Viola listened to it. As he spoke of his father’s marriage with the desolate girl who had lost every living creature belonging to her in that awful time, the square and stately tower of Tarringford Church rose suddenly on their right, beyond a long green meadow. The roofs of the old town clustered about it, climbing the slope from the water ; below was the bridge, and a row of poplars, trembling green and silver, sheltered the massive walls of an old water-mill and hid its tall modern chimney.

Young Dampier rested on his oars, and the boat drifted slowly down towards Tarringford bridge.

‘There’s our town,’ he said, ‘and in front you see Arnold’s mill.’

‘How pretty it is !’ said Viola.

‘Would you like to land at the bridge ? We might walk up and look at the church. Oh, it would be quite safe ; nobody there knows you.’

The girl hesitated a moment. Then, as Edwin waited for her answer, suddenly the church clock boomed down over town and meadow, each stroke rolling solemnly along the water.

‘One—two—three—four—*five* !’

Viola flushed as she listened.

‘I had no idea it was so late,’ she said. ‘What will Mrs. Downes and Jessie think of me ? Please row home as fast as you can, Mr. Dampier.’

‘The river winds very much, you know,’ said Edwin. ‘But I had no notion, either—the time has flown.’

He set to work resolutely to row against the stream.

About the same time Mr. Arnold walked into Mrs. Downes’s kitchen, on his way back from a visit to Colonel Dampier at the Hall. He was in a high good-humour.

‘He wrote to me to come,’ he explained. ‘He’s too much

of a rum old sort for me to go without being asked, that landlord of yours. He's going to sell me Stepford Hill Farm. Thin end of the wedge, Jessie my dear !'

'Stepford Hill Farm !' repeated Jessie.

'Excuse me, Joseph, but I don't believe it,' said Mrs. Downes.

Arnold nodded. 'Everybody knew he couldn't go on long. He can't live on your rent, as I've told you before now. He offered me that seven-acre field on the Tarringford road for building purposes, but I told him that wouldn't suit me, and made him an offer for Holt's farm. He didn't refuse—said he must consult his son. I saw that young gentleman in his boat this afternoon, rowing your young lady. They find each other nice companions, I dare say.'

Mrs. Downes and Jessie glanced at each other. This, then, was the reason why Missy had not come in to tea, why Jessie had failed to find her after Mr. Smith was gone.

'I mentioned it to the Colonel, and he looked pretty black,' Arnold went on. 'I hope I didn't make mischief. I shouldn't care to be in that young man's shoes, for he is a frightful martinet, I feel sure.'

'It's all right. They are devoted to each other,' said Mrs. Downes, as lightly as she could.

'Who ?'

'Colonel Dampier and Mr. Edwin, of course.'

'Oh ! I thought you meant Mr. Edwin and—well, we won't gossip, but it's a pity nobody knows anything about her. Tea, Jessie ? Yes, if you please, my dear.'

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE COLONEL'S POINT OF VIEW.

'Thus have I shunn'd the fire for fear of burning,  
And drench'd me in the sea, where I am drown'd.'

LOCKE happened to be out that afternoon, and it was Firkins who opened the front door for Mr. Arnold after his interview with her master.

'Good-day, Mrs. Firkins,' said Arnold, beaming with satisfaction. 'Lovely afternoon. The young Squire is spending it very agreeably on the river.'

'Is he indeed!' said Firkins. She glared at Mr. Arnold, for whom she had an impartial dislike, chiefly based on his connection with the Downes family.

'With a charming companion,' added Joseph.

Firkins glared still more fiercely. Her whole person seemed to bristle with indignant curiosity. But at that moment the library bell rang sharply for the second time. She dismissed Mr. Arnold with a short nod, and slammed the door upon him; then waddled hastily along the hall to answer her master's summons.

'You rang, sir?' she said, popping a very red face inside the library door.

Colonel Dampier was pacing up and down the wide space of bare floor. He was, if possible, paler than usual, the lines of his face even more set and stern; at the same time, for once in his life, he looked thoroughly awake to outside things, and his bright, commanding eyes might have been surveying a real and present battlefield.

'Come in, Firkins. I want to ask you a question,' he said.

Firkins came in and shut the door, standing in front of it and staring fixedly at her master.

'Have you seen the young lady who is staying with Mrs. Downes?'

'Yes, sir, I have.'

'Her name is Field, is it not? Do you know anything else about her?'

Instead of answering, Firkins made such a curious grimace that the Colonel's eyes grew brighter than ever.

'What do you mean?' he said sharply. 'Is she respectable?'

'Respectable, sir!' gasped Firkins.

'Don't repeat my words. It seems that Mr. Edwin is with her on the river—they were seen, an hour ago, halfway to Tarringford. It is hinted that they are in the habit of going about together. Do you know anything of all this?'

'I always did say, and so did Locke, that it was a mistake Mrs. Downes having lodgers, which wasn't necessary, either, for all the parish knows she's better off than any of her neighbours. You'll remember, sir, me and Locke said so from the very beginning, long before any of us had set eyes on the young lady.'

'I remember. Go on. Tell me all you know.'

On which Firkins told her story: how she had heard of

Mr. Edwin being seen walking with Mrs. Downes's lodger, and how she had very nearly come straight to her master about it, but was afraid of making mischief and vexing Mr. Edwin, so had gone to the farm instead and had given Jessie Downes a piece of her mind.

'And then,' she said, 'who should walk in upon us but the young lady herself. Well, sir, I was dumbfounded just now when you asked if she were respectable. She's the very living and breathing and speaking image of my old mistress, the Countess of Kilkenny, the best woman as ever lived.'

'Very extraordinary,' said the Colonel, after a pause. 'You mean she—she is a lady, then?'

'A lady, sir—to the ends of her pretty curly hair and the tips of her long fingers.'

'And did she tell you she was related to this Lady Kilkenny?'

'I had no chance of asking her. But the Downes's know nothing about it. Jessie Downes said the likeness must be accidental. Her name, you see, is Field.'

'I once knew a man who married a daughter of Lord Kilkenny's,' said Colonel Dampier thoughtfully.

'Was it Lord Fairfax, please sir—him that married Lady Viola? This young lady favours Lady Viola too, but not so much as the Countess.'

'Yes, it was Lord Fairfax—but before he married: I never saw his wife. They were people of a position which—— It seems impossible that one of them should be here alone in farmhouse lodgings. Quite impossible. Field! Fetch the "Peerage," Firkins, if you please.'

Firkins executed this order with a good deal of grumbling, for it meant searching with a candle through one of the covered bookcases in the still shut-up drawing room, into which her young master had not again ventured to penetrate. But as her own curiosity was interested, it was not long before she conveyed 'Burke' into the library, and laid it on Colonel Dampier's desk. He turned to 'Kilkenny,' and then to 'Fairfax.' 'Field—Field,' he repeated; but no such name was to be found in the records of either family. At last he shut the fat red volume and pushed it aside.

'You are mistaken, Firkins,' he said. 'At least, the likeness must be accidental—or it must have some explanation not to be found in "Burke."



He began pacing the room again.

'And you think they have seen a good deal of each other, my son and this—young lady?'

'I've no proof of that, sir,' said Firkins candidly. 'They was seen once; and now it seems they've been seen again. Between whiles, I've heard of nothing. But it ain't likely——'

'Confound all this abominable gossip!' cried the Colonel in sudden impatience. 'That will do, Firkins; you can go.'

Edwin came in just in time for dinner, still under the glamour of the afternoon, his mind in an odd chaos which seemed made up of peace and restlessness, first one prevailing, then the other. Viola's conquest was supreme; and yet he dared not flatter himself that she thought of him at all as he thought of her. Her kindness was exquisite, but he dared not presume the smallest inch upon it. Still he was far happier than before. There she was for all the golden summer; and who could tell what some of those glorious days might bring forth!

He came in with a new resolution in his mind. It would be difficult, but he must tell his father about her. It had not seemed necessary before; that one first walk hardly needed confession, and she had wished for a certain mystery; but now that he looked forward to many walks in woods and fields, many long afternoons on the river, it became impossible thus to give away himself and his time without a word to his father. If only he could manage a meeting!—they were so sure to admire each other. Then perhaps she would tell his father all she had told him. Edwin wished that very much; it would so greatly simplify the situation. But anyhow, his father must know what she was to him, this girl who was spending the summer at the Old Slang Farm.

At dinner, however, he saw to his regret that Colonel Dampier was hardly in the mood for receiving confidences. He was in a strange mood. If he had been an ordinary man one would have said he was out of temper: but this small and worrying fault did not belong to his character. He could be angry enough for a good reason—sometimes very suddenly; he could be irritable if any point in his history plagued him; he could be so absorbed as to take no notice of anything that went on around him. To-day it was none of these three things. At least, he was both irritable and thoughtful; but Edwin knew by instinct that the 'History of Battles' was not

in fault ; and at the same time some mysterious cloud—it might have been called sulkiness—hung between him and his son, so that Edwin, with the best will in the world, could not ask frankly what was the matter.

This went on through dinner. Later, Edwin strolled out on the lawn with his cigarette, and lingered, looking through the trees towards the farm. The twilight deepened, but to-night there was no moon, and the nightingales were silent now. What was she doing ? What was she thinking of ?

His father had not followed him out, but was pacing up and down the lamp-lit library alone, still in the strange, silent mood which repelled confidence.

Edwin, coming back along the lawn, saw the shadow as it passed and re-passed the windows. He went to the nearest, which was open, and stepped into the room.

‘Won’t you come out ?’ he said. ‘It is a jolly night ; not so stuffy as indoors.’

‘No ; but you may come in,’ said the Colonel, lifting his head. ‘I wish to speak to you.’

There was severity in his tone, and coldness. Edwin shrugged his shoulders slightly, and sat down in his own chair near the window. Colonel Dampier sat down too, on a hard chair in front of his desk. The shaded lamp left their faces in half darkness, shedding its circle of light on the floor. The silence became strained and painful, and Edwin was just going to break it when his father looked up and spoke.

‘It surprises me, Ned, that you should have left me to learn from other quarters how you have spent your time lately.’

Edwin was too much startled to answer at once ; he was also angry. Who had been meddling between him and his father ?

‘Do you listen to other people’s tales of me, sir ?’ he said.

‘Don’t recriminate. Be frank with me now, if possible. Why have I heard nothing of your acquaintance with this mysterious lady ?’

‘There was not much to tell you till to-day. I have seen her three times, and spoken to her twice,’ said Edwin very low.

‘The acquaintance must have advanced by strides, then, if she allowed you to row her down to Tarringford !’

This seemed like an instance of second sight to Edwin, and silenced him completely for the moment. Yet, after all, it was an impossible feat of the Colonel's penetration, wonderful as that occasionally was.

'Do you mind telling me how you heard of that?' he said.

'Certainly not. Mr. Arnold was here on business this afternoon, and mentioned having seen you from the bridge.'

As Edwin muttered something, his father added: 'You are displeased with Mr. Arnold? You did not intend me to know how you had spent the afternoon? That is not like you, Ned.'

Somehow, no stern words of angry reproof could have touched and moved the young man as these did. It was true: he had never before kept anything from his father, except worries concerned with the estate, with which it had not seemed necessary to trouble him.

'I was going to tell you all about it this very evening,' he said.

'Why have you not done so already?'

'I thought you were rather preoccupied, father. You seemed to have something on your mind, so I waited before talking of my own affairs.'

'Whose affairs were likely to be on my mind, if not yours? I am ready to hear what you have to say.'

Edwin was silent for a minute.

'Do you mind telling me what stories you have heard? There will be less confusion if we clear the ground first.'

'Very true,' said Colonel Dampier. He proceeded to tell Edwin frankly all he had heard from Joseph Arnold, and then all he had heard from Firkins, not forgetting the likeness to Lady Kilkenney and the fruitless search in 'Burke.'

Edwin was glad that his face was in shadow, for he felt himself turning red and pale, while his pulses throbbed like those of a young wild animal caught in a net. In such a world of tale-bearing and leading-strings, what was a man to do? Hedged in by briars, indeed, as in the fairy tale he had told her. She little knew how true it was. Would she care if she did? He thought so, unless those sweet eyes had deceived him.

When his father had done he began to speak very calmly and quietly, and told him how they had met; told him the whole story, in fact, though sometimes with difficulty, down to their parting at Mrs. Downes's gate that afternoon. He did

not, of course, break Viola's confidence ; but he told his father that she had explained to him the reasons which made her wish to spend the summer months in the quietest retirement she could find—reasons which he was bound to keep to himself, but his father might rest assured that they did her honour.

'She is not, then, what she represents herself to be ?' said Colonel Dampier.

'I don't think she represents herself as anything but what she is,' said Edwin. 'However, Mrs. Downes knows all, and perhaps it does not concern anybody else.'

'How did Mrs. Downes hear of her, or she of Mrs. Downes ? Was it a mere chance ?'

'That is a part of the story that I am bound not to tell, father ; not yet, at least. Some day I hope you will know everything.'

'Is Field her real name ?'

'Let us suppose that it is, if you don't mind.'

'We seem to be in a labyrinth of mysteries,' said Colonel Dampier gravely. 'I begin to think there may be something in Firkins's impressions. However, if the name is unknown, it is difficult to fix on the person.'

'Don't try to do so, sir—to oblige her—and me.'

There was a long silence. A cockchafer rushed in from the starlit darkness outside, bouncing and dashing round the room. When it flew at the lamp, Edwin got up and caught it and put it out of the window. Then he stood still near his father.

'Are you engaged to this young lady ?' asked the Colonel abruptly.

'Good heavens—no !'

'Does she know of your—admiration ?'

'I have said nothing. Why, think how seldom—how little——'

'Very true ; but I have known men make fools of themselves on still slighter provocation. However, I am glad you are still in your senses. Whatever she may be, it would be dishonourable in you to raise false hopes——'

'False hopes !' repeated Edwin, bewildered.

'Yes, false hopes. Meeting you as the heir of Stepford, it would not naturally occur to a girl that you could not possibly marry. That you must know as well as I do. Our affairs are

burdened and complicated enough already ; they can bear no more.'

To this Edwin had nothing to say, for he knew that his father was right. How, indeed, could he offer the sweetest girl in the world a share of Stepford struggles and anxieties ! It was rather hard to be so roughly awakened from a charming dream, so ruthlessly flung back on plain matter-of-fact, on that reality which holds so little romance for most people.

'I don't suppose she cares the least bit for me,' he muttered.

'She does not dislike you, I imagine ?'

'Oh no ; she's awfully kind and good to me.'

'Kind and good. Ah ! I daresay she finds your company more amusing than her own. If this residence at the farm is a mere freak she may find it tiresome sometimes.'

'It is not a mere freak——' Edwin began, but checked himself.

'Don't tell me her secrets,' said his father. 'But oblige me by ceasing to run after her. You will only bring unhappiness on yourself, possibly on her too ; and you have plenty to occupy your time without idle flirtation. Promise me that you will not meet her again.'

There was silence for a minute or two. Then Edwin said gravely, 'I can't promise you that, sir.'

He expected his father to be very angry, for the occasions were rare indeed when they found themselves in opposition to each other, and the old soldier was accustomed to be obeyed. To the young man's surprise, however, he said nothing. He stooped over the desk, stroking down his white moustache with a long, thin white hand. When he spoke it was in a kinder voice than usual.

'Sit down, Ned. I wish you to hear what Arnold came about this afternoon.'

Edwin went back to his chair. As he sat down his hand fell on 'The Three Musketeers,' which had been lying unread for many days half under the cushion. He was conscious of a passing wonder at the difference between d'Artagnan's views of life and his own. Which was the best, after all ? Then he listened to his father, and forgot even Viola for the moment, thinking of Stepford Hill in other hands, of old Harry Holt with Arnold for his landlord.

'Oh ! but I can't stand that, you know !' he cried out indignantly.

It suddenly seemed as if he had far more reason to be angry with his father than his father with him.

‘Have you thought it over, when you say that?’ said Colonel Dampier. ‘A few months ago I should have agreed with you; but now I am beginning to think that it may be time to retire from the outworks. By concentration of our forces we shall defend the citadel better. It would be different if the whole village belonged to us. The man has taken a fancy to that particular farm, and offers a good price for it. He would not hear of the seven-acre field. He is a shrewd man, and I don’t altogether dislike him.’

‘Poor old Holt would be ruined,’ said Edwin. ‘He has a righteous horror of Arnold already.’

‘Holt can’t go on for ever, as it is. He is a feckless, unbusinesslike fellow, and his farming, Arnold tells me, is mere child’s play.’

‘He is getting old, and he has had a lot of misfortunes, and no money. He is in debt, I know. He owes Arnold money, and expects him to be hard upon him. But to turn him out of his farm at this time of day!’

‘You don’t think I have done enough for him?’

‘Yes, sir, you have done a great deal for him. But he is worth helping—and think how long the Holts have held the farm! It will break his heart and kill him—poor old chap!’

Far into the night the argument went on. Edwin would not at first agree that it was necessary for his father to sell any land at all, and was hardly convinced even by a full statement of all their liabilities. One thing the Colonel dreaded more than any—that he might be forced to fail in the regularity with which he paid the interest on the heavy mortgage that crippled the estate, a weight brought upon him by his eagerness to pay the old Squire’s debts and set the name of Dampier right with all men.

At last, after a long discussion, Colonel Dampier consented to delay his answer to Arnold till the old family lawyers in London had been consulted as to whether there were any better means of raising money for future necessities. And when Edwin went to bed that night he had promised his father to go to London the very next day to see Messrs. Wyse and Goodenough on the subject.

There was no time to say goodbye to anybody, for his father was bent on his going by the early train. But he went off

cheerfully, consoling himself with the thought that he would certainly save old Harry and Stepford Hill from Arnold's clutches, and would be home again in a day or two.

And then, however right the Colonel might be in his warnings, it would be almost physically impossible to live within ten minutes' walk of the Old Slang without meeting Viola.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A DISCOVERY.

'But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!'

MR. WYSE had been dead some years, and the firm, retaining his name, now consisted of old Mr. Goodenough and his son George, an agreeable bachelor of five-and-thirty. These two men were generally on the friendliest terms with their clients, and it had long been a matter of vexation to Mr. Goodenough that Colonel Dampier, whom he had known and admired for many years, should have chosen to lead such a recluse life and to bring up his son to the same.

He therefore welcomed young Edwin very kindly, talked over the family affairs with him in the most satisfactory way, advised the selling of some shares rather than of the land, and asked him to dine at his house at Richmond. Here George Goodenough, who had taken a fancy to the young fellow, told him he was off to Switzerland in two or three days' time, and invited him to come too. Edwin said at once and decidedly that it was quite impossible, but Mr. Goodenough was not inclined to accept this for an answer. He told him to think it over, and in the meanwhile, as he was to be in London another day, asked him to dine with him at his club and to go to the theatre.

Edwin accepted the good-natured invitation; he was young, and ready to enjoy himself, though his rather preoccupied looks had an explanation which the kind Goodenoughs did not dream of; for in truth he was counting the hours till he should find himself back at Stepford. Mr. Goodenough understood all the affairs better than anybody, and took a more cheerful view than he and his father did. He did not think

Mr. Goodenough would say that it was impossible for him to marry. Of course he must be poor, as long as he was a land-owner, and he was resolved not to give up the land; but after all, if people cared for each other, and if there was just enough to live upon——

It was a little too early for him to meet George Goodenough, so he strolled into the reading-room of the hotel and took up a society paper, just for the sake of holding something in his hand while he dreamed about the future. He did not at all know what the paper was; it happened to be one of the smaller and more scandalous of its kind. As his eyes ran idly down the columns, they lighted on a well-known name, and he found himself reading what follows:—

‘Society is a good deal interested this summer in the unaccountable disappearance of the Honourable Viola Fairfax, only daughter and heiress of the late Viscount Fairfax, and granddaughter, on the mother’s side, of the late Earl and Countess of Kilkenny. The young lady, whose beauty made a sensation two seasons ago, had been living for some time in a sort of honourable confinement at her own house, Northley Castle, under the watchful care of her guardians, the well-known brothers, Sir Henry Marston and General Frank Marston. Whether it was by Miss Fairfax’s own wish that she was thus kept under an extinguisher, is not known; in any case, she vanished alone from Northley some few weeks since, and no efforts have yet availed to trace the fugitive. Some people say, but this is probably ill-natured gossip, that her guardians had brought some pressure to bear upon her regarding her future life, and that she preferred to assure herself of free action by going into hiding till her twenty-first birthday, now not far distant. Sir Henry Marston has an only son, who may have been a little extravagant. And Miss Fairfax, at twenty-one, comes into possession of a fortune of £500,000. Whether these facts and the young lady’s disappearance have any connection with each other, wiser heads than ours may be able to divine.’

‘Good God!’ muttered Edwin Dampier to himself. His head swam round; he turned white to the lips, and the paper fell from his hand.

Two or three people in the room looked at him curiously; but in a moment he pulled himself together, picked up the paper, and walked rather shakily to the balcony outside, which



was empty. Here he sat down and read the paragraph again, and then again ; three or four times over ; then holding the paper on his knee he tried to think what it all meant.

‘Five hundred thousand pounds !’

Of course in one way it made no difference. His Viola must always be her own beautiful self, kind and gracious to the ignorant young fellow who had given her his heart without a thought but of her kindness and her beauty. But any castles he might have built in the air vanished into the thinnest mist at the touch of facts like these. It was all over with him now.

In the midst of his despair, to be sure, as he sat there in all the roar of London, looking down on moving crowds, yet hearing nothing but the gentle splashing of a river, and seeing nothing but the softness of brown eyes lifted to meet his—in the midst of all this something said to him—‘Perhaps, after all, in spite of everything, she may care for you a little !’ But Edwin answered that voice and said, ‘I can never ask her now.’

The hour that George Goodenough had appointed struck and passed before Edwin was at all conscious of the flight of time. However, he came to himself, and then it seemed as if he had known this always—this great golden barrier between himself and her.

‘Miss Fairfax !’ he said to himself, ‘I might have known all, if I had not been such an ignoramus. Why, she told me. She didn’t realise what an ass I was—that it meant no more to me than any other name. The great heiress—Lord Fairfax’s daughter ! Well, I must go.’

Mr. Goodenough thought young Dampier a very queer chap, though somehow he liked him better than ever when he looked up in the middle of dinner, after a fit of silence, and said, ‘Do you know, I should awfully like to go with you to Switzerland. Only I don’t know what my father will say, or where the money’s to come from.’

‘Oh, if that’s all, my dear fellow’——said the excellent George.

\* \* \* \* \*

Steady-going Stepford was a good deal astonished at the sudden disappearance of the young squire. A letter and a couple of telegrams between Mr. Goodenough and Colonel Dampier settled the whole business. Edwin wished to return home quite as little as his father wished him to do so, and started off with George Goodenough to lands unknown for an

uncertain time, easy in the assurance that Arnold would be disappointed, and hoping—or fancying that he hoped—that Miss Fairfax would have left Stepford before he saw it again. Absence was the only safety, the only refuge. Colonel Dampier thought so too ; though he did not know what had brought his son to so prudent a mind. He missed Edwin horribly from the first : even the ‘History of Battles’ lost its charm when there was nobody to listen to extracts, to give an occasional opinion, to justify the author in his own admiration of some clever touch or well-managed argument. The old place wanted young life about it ; the silence was oppressive through those long summer days. Even the old servants felt it, though Mr. Edwin gave them plenty of subjects for grumbling when he was at home.

Viola herself was beginning to wonder a little what had become of her true knight, and why such long intervals between his visits should be necessary, when she came into the kitchen one afternoon and found Mrs. Downes and Jessie listening to a story from Hezekiah. The wind was blowing the old man’s hair and beard as he stood in the doorway, more like an Italian beggar than an English farm-servant. In his voice, in the fixed attention of the two women, there was something strange and fateful.

‘Yes, he’s gone, I tell ye—gone to some o’ them furrin parts across the sea, and the Colonel his self don’t know when he’s coming back again. Well, ma’am, ’tis natural. I always did say as Stepford were a dead-alive sort of a hole for a fine young man to waste the best years of his life in. But up at the Hall they’re sore put to it without him. “It’s likely as we should miss him, Mr. Gibbs,” says Mrs. Firkins to me, “as have known him since he were in short frocks.” I says, “Yes, ma’am, it is.” He’d always a pleasant word for an old man, had Master Edwin ; and there’s many as would say the same. Still, ma’am, when all’s said and done, it’s right and natural that a young chap like him shouldn’t spend his days loitering about Stepford.’

‘Quite right, and I’ve often been the one to say so,’ said Mrs. Downes. ‘But I do wonder at his going off without wishing us goodbye.’

She had other wonderings too, which hid themselves in the corners of her eyes and mouth, in the wrinkles of her broad brow.

‘Well, bless him, I hope he’ll come to no harm,’ she said.

‘As to going off without saying goodbye,’ went on Hezekiah

slowly, 'I don't blame him for that. It's just what I should ha' done myself. I never could abide being fussed over by women. You'd have cried and roared, ma'am, if Mr. Edwin had told you as he was going. He knowed that, and it's more nor a man can stand, to my thinking.'

'Did anybody ever cry and roar over you, Hezekiah?' said Jessie.

'Ah! that's my affair,' said the old man, winking. 'But about coming to harm, Mrs. Downes, ma'am, that's just what Mrs. Firkins said to me. It's Switzerland he's gone to, and she do say it's a most dangerous place, from all she can hear. People slips down mountains and tumbles through holes in the ice, so as not even their dead bodies is ever seen again. Few of them as goes to some of them places returns any more to their native country.'

'Switzerland is not quite so bad as that, Hezekiah,' said Missy. She came forward smiling from the dark background of the kitchen. 'I have been there,' she said, 'and it is more beautiful than anything you can imagine. People love climbing the mountains, and really there are not so many accidents. Mr. Dampier will enjoy it immensely.'

Hezekiah shook his head, looking at her suspiciously with his foxy old eyes. Mrs. Downes felt a little puzzled as she too watched the girl, who went on talking about Switzerland in a general sort of way, as if she knew and cared nothing about the special person who had gone there now. Mrs. Downes caught herself wondering—was it any heartless flirting on this girl's part which had driven Edwin away? It seemed all so odd, so unlike him. In spite of Hezekiah's nonsense, it was most improbable that Edwin would have gone away without a word of farewell to any of his old friends. Yet one could hardly look in Missy's face and accuse her of anything unkind or unworthy.

Jessie knew a little more than her mother, but not much. She knew at least that the hand which lay on her shoulder, as Viola talked so calmly to the others, was trembling and restless. Her thoughts, however, were almost immediately distracted by a step in the yard outside. Then Mr. Joseph Arnold, red-faced and bustling, appeared behind Hezekiah, who shuffled quickly out of his way.

'May I have a chair, Jessie? Excuse me, ladies; it's as cheap sitting as standing when you're out visiting, as the

proverb says, and you would be tired yourselves if you'd walked from Tarringford in this sun and wind. Thank you. Please to sit down yourselves, or I can't be comfortable.'

'I was just going to get tea,' said Jessie. 'You do look tired, to be sure.'

'And something more than tired,' added Mrs. Downes, sitting down politely in her own chair. 'Is anything wrong, Joseph?'

Few people look attractive when they are cross, and Joseph Arnold was not an exception to this rule. He was frowning and ugly: his eyes had a dull maliciousness: his very clothes looked ill-tempered and awry. All this was the more striking in contrast with his usual serenity and self-satisfaction. Viola thought him a more horrid object than usual, and instead of sitting down in the kitchen, followed Hezekiah into the yard. She was seized with a sudden wish to see the calves fed.

'Well, I am put out, if you ask me,' said Joseph. 'You remember how pleased I was the other day, when your Colonel sent for me on the question of selling land?'

Mrs. Downes and Jessie assented at the same moment, but Jessie went on—

'Yes, Joe; but I told you then I didn't care about it, and thinking hasn't altered my mind. Mother and I, we neither of us care to see the estate split up, though it may seem to be for our advantage, so we sha'n't break our hearts if it's fallen through.'

'Oh, you won't, won't you? Rather peculiar, but I must say you always were like that. You always preferred your landlord's interest to mine, and if you think it kind and natural, I don't—so there!'

'Don't cut up rough about it,' said Jessie coolly. 'But tell us what has happened, for I don't know.'

'Well, I told you that the old man as good as promised to sell me Stepford Hill Farm. Now he writes to me, just as cool as you please, and says that on consideration he does not wish to sell any of his land at present. I assure you, he went so far the other day that I might have involved myself in arrangements——'

'But you didn't?'

'Why, Jessie, what makes you so snappish this afternoon? You're very short-sighted, let me tell you. As to splitting up the estate, it's bound to split itself up one of these days, and I suppose you would rather *you and I* became the owners of it

than see it fall into the hands of a lot of needy speculators. I could make something of the land about here. It wants thousands spending on it. I could spend 'em, and I would, for I know it would pay in the end. I should farm a lot of the land myself, and any tenants I kept should be *good* ones.'

'Not poor old Mr. Holt, for instance?' said Mrs. Downes.

'Poor old Mr. Holt!' cried Joseph indignantly. 'Old scamp and humbug! He owes me hundreds, and has kept me out of it long enough. No, he's not exactly the sort of tenant a new proprietor would choose.'

'But you are not going to be the proprietor, it seems,' said Jessie. 'What made Colonel Dampier change his mind?'

'Oh, that precious son of his, I suppose, who shares your consideration for "poor old Mr. Holt." He said he must consult his son. But old Holt is fast enough in my clutches, though I'm not his landlord, and so they shall all find out.'

'Don't talk in that dreadful way,' said Jessie, 'as if you were a Jew. Have some tea with plenty of sugar in it, to sweeten your temper.'

'I don't mind if I do,' said Arnold. 'Come, I'm not such a bad fellow after all, but it is disappointing to be thwarted in what you have set your mind on. You understand that, Mrs. Downes, I'm sure.'

'Of course I do,' said Mrs. Downes peaceably. 'And have you heard that Mr. Edwin has started off to Switzerland quite unexpected? Hezekiah has just brought the news from the Hall.'

'That's sudden,' said Joseph, looking from one to the other with keen curiosity. 'What's behind that, eh? Has your young lady given him the sack? Why, it was only on Monday I saw them in the boat together looking ever so sentimental, and as happy as you please.'

'Oh no, it can't be that,' said Mrs. Downes, half wondering. Yet in her heart she said, 'Can it be that?'

'That's it, you take my word for it, and a good lesson for the young puppy. He's gone off in a fit of the sulks. Capital joke! but I suppose I mustn't chaff Miss Field about it, must I, Jessie?'

Mr. Arnold was fast recovering his temper.

'If you dare do such a thing, I'll never speak to you again—never!' Jessie replied with much decision. 'Besides, I'm positive you're wrong.'

*(To be continued.)*

Digitized by Google

*SOME SMALL DEER.*


---

AMONG the smaller members of the animal world we may find a good many friends—and enemies. Indeed, in many cases their size and their importance by no means run in couples ; and a large amount of curious legendary lore has clustered round them. The ichneumon—to whom, under its modern name of mongoose, we pay deserved honour as the serpent-slayer—which of us has not done homage to the celebrated Rikki-Tikki of the bottle-brush tail ?—had in old times equal and less well-merited glory as the destroyer of crocodiles ; and this, according to the veracious description of an old-world chronicler, is how he did it : ‘ Now there is in Egypt a certain bird called crochillus, whose nature is to wait upon the crocodile, and, with her beak and claws, gently, and with a kinde of delight, to pull out the remnants of the meat sticking in the crocodile’s teeth ; wherewithal, the crocodile being pleased, openeth his mouth wide to be thus cleansed by this bird, and so, falling fast asleep gaping, watched all the while by the vigilant eye of the ichneumon ; perceiving him to be deeply plunged into a senseless security, goeth presently and walloweth in sand and dirt, and with a singular confidence entereth into the gate of death, that is, the crocodile’s mouth, and suddenly pierceth like an arrow through the monster’s wide throat, down into his belly. The crocodile, feeling this unlooked-for evil, awaketh out of sleep, and in a rage, or madness, void of counsel, runneth to and fro, far and wide, plunging himself into the bottom of the river, where finding no ease, returneth to land again, and there breatheth out his intolerable poyson, beating himself with all his power, striving to be delivered from this insufferable evil. But the ichneumon careth not for all this ; sitting close upon the liver of the crocodile, and feeding full sweetly upon his entrails, until, at last, being satisfied, eateth out her own passage through the

belly of her hoast. The self-same thing is related by Plutarch ; but I wonder for what cause the beast should rowl herself in sand and dirt to enter into the crocodile's body. For, first of all, if, after her rolling in dirt, she dry herself in the sun, yet will not that hard crust be any sufficient armour of proof to defend her small body from the violence of the crocodile's teeth ; and, besides, it increaseth the quantity of her body, making her more unfit to slide down through the crocodile's narrow throat ; and therefore the authors cannot be but deceived in ascribing this quality to her when she is to enter into the crocodile, but rather, I believe, she useth this defence againt the asp, as Aristotle saith ; and therefore, the author, seeing her so covered with mud, might easily be mistaken in her purpose. For it is true, indeed, that when she seeth the asp upon the land, she calleth her fellows, who arm themselves as before said before the combat, by which means they are safely preserved from the bitings of their enemies ; or, if it be true that they wallow themselves in the mud, they do not dry themselves in the sun, but while their bodies are moist, slide down more easily into the crocodile's belly.'

The hedgehog may be considered in one respect as a friend to morality, as he supplies the simile for an envious man—

'Like a hedgehog rolled up the wrong way,  
Tormenting himself with his bristles.'

A more unpleasant situation can hardly be conceived. Master Audley is responsible for the following receipt for a 'compost,' whatever that may be : 'Take a porpine, otherwise called an English hedgehog, and quarter him in pieces, and put the said beast in a still, with these ingredients : item, a quart of redde wyne, a pinte of rosewater, a quarter of a pound of sugar, cinnamon, and two great raisins.' Albertus Magnus also considers the hedgehog valuable, asserting that the oil in which the eye of a hedgehog had been fried would, if put in a brazen vessel, enable a person to see by night as well as by day. The rural hind considered it an unprincipled animal, who robbed the cows of their milk ; and the German Mährchen attributed a degree of cuteness to it that made it win a race run with the hare in not nearly so creditable a fashion as the conscientious tortoise. The Romany folk wisely consider a 'hotchi-witchi,' baked in clay, an excellent dish ; and the 'urchin' himself, as the English peasants call

him, is not without his own gastronomical predilections, and likes pheasants' eggs, as we learn from Mrs. Ewing's delightful story of 'Father and Mother Hedgehog.' Alas ! it is sad to think that never again will her quaint, delicious humour illuminate the histories of either hedgehogs or humans !

The hare, graceful and defenceless as it is, has been regarded by almost all nations as a curious and not quite canny creature. The goddess Freyja walked in the fields at Aargau accompanied by a silver-grey hare, with, occasionally, two hares holding her train. In Saxony the Easter hare brings the Easter eggs ; in Ceylon the natives look for him in the moon, where, they say, 'Buddha placed him as a reward for offering to be roasted for his supper, when he had lost his way in a wood, and was dying of hunger.' A tribe called the Namaquas, on the south-west coast of Africa, say that once upon a time the moon called to the hare, and bade him take this message to man—'As I die and am born again, so you shall die and be again alive.' But the hare forgot and said, 'As I die and am *not* born again'—whereat the moon was so angry that she threw a stick at the hare, which split his lip, and the hare was so frightened that he ran off, and has never stopped running since. The same tribe abstain from eating its flesh, as they believe it would make them fainthearted as hares. It is bad luck to meet a hare, as Ellison notices—

'Nor did we meet, with nimble feet,  
One fearful little lepus ;  
That certain sign, as some divine,  
Of fortune bad to keep us.'

Quarles also notices the superstition—

'If a poor timorous hare but cross the way,  
Morus will keep the chamber all the day.'

When such an unfortunate encounter occurs, the right thing to do is to address it thus—

'Hare before,  
Trouble behind :  
Change ye,  
Cross and free me'—

or—

'Hare, Hare,  
God send thee care.'



'The mythical hare' is undoubtedly the moon ; and they are certainly often found closely connected in legendary lore.

'Thus,' says Mr. Robinson, 'the Chinese represent the moon figure, Jut-ho, with a hare at her feet, and symbolise Time by a rabbit pounding in a mortar. In Vedic myth, "the leaping one" is the moon, and the spots on the face of it are hares by the shore of the moon-lake. These have a king, and it is Death. . . . The Red Indians also have a hare in their moon. But its peculiarly sinister reputation has arisen from its own timidity—"the hartlesse hare"—the most timorous of animals, suggesting fear, and so portending something to be feared. And in this significance the whole world at one time or another has taken divination from "the fearful hare." From north to south, from Lapland to Arabia, from east to west, from the Chinese to the Red Indians, all nations in the past, and many in the present, have seen the hand of fate in the movement of this little creature.' The Forfarshire fishermen, if they are so unlucky as to catch sight of a hare on their way to the boats, will not put out to sea ; and their Cornish brothers believe that when a storm is brewing a white hare may be seen on the quays at night. Carew, in his 'Survey of Cornwall,' mentions that 'to talk of hares, or such uncouth things, proves as ominous to a fisherman as the beginning of a voyage to a mariner on Candlemas Day. Yet to see a white hare was sometimes a lucky omen.' Hoveden, in his 'Chronicle,' mentions that, one being seen to jump out of a hedge when Henry II. was invading Ireland, it was immediately caught and brought to the King, 'in signum victoriæ.' Hare's flesh was likely, according to mediæval sages, to cause melancholy—'melancholy as a hare,' says Shakespeare. Witches were particularly fond of assuming puss's shape, and a hare's foot carried round the neck or in the pocket was a sure remedy for cramp, as worthy Mr. Pepys devoutly believed in the reign of the Merry Monarch. In an old French book of magic occurs the following recipe for magic garters :—

'Gather some of the herb called motherwort, when the sun is entering the first degree of the sign of Capricorn ; let it dry a little in the shade, and make some garters of the skin of a young hare ; that is to say, having cut the skin of the hare into strips two inches wide, double them, sew the before-mentioned herb between, and wear them on your legs. No horse can long keep up with a man on foot who is furnished with these

garters.' An old book of Medical Recipes, dated 1610, instructs us how 'to take away freckles': 'Take the bloude of an hare, anoynte them with it, and it will do them awaye.' Hares have a patron saint in the person of St. Monacella, or Melangell, an Irish princess, who, having taken a vow of celibacy, fled from Ireland to escape marriage, and for fifteen years lived where now stands the church of Pennant Melangell. Brockwell Yseythrog, Prince of Powys, was one day hunting a hare, which took refuge in her dress. The hounds would not touch it, and the huntsman's horn clave to his lips. The Prince gave the land to the Saint, and here the church was built; and hares were known as Wyn Melangell, or St. Monacella's lambs. For generations, even to the memory of living men, no one in the parish would kill a hare; and it was an article of faith that if any one cried to a hunted hare, 'God and St. Monacella be with you!' the creature was certain to escape. On the remains of the old church screen, still extant, her legend may be seen rudely carved. Cowper's tame hares—Tiny, Puss, and Bess—curiously appropriate pets for the timid, melancholy poet, whose vivid characteristics he has described with loving minuteness—are familiar figures; so is the vain-glorious hare in Æsop's fable, and the remarkable March Hare which Alice met in Wonderland. Dryden makes the hare symbolise the Quakers—

'Among the timorous kind, the quaking hare  
Professed neutrality, but would not swear.'

She has several proverbs all to herself. 'Mad as a March hare,' whence come the epithet 'hare-brained,' for reckless folly; 'to kiss the hare's foot,' *i.e.*, be a day after the fair; 'to hold with the hare and run with the hounds.' Those who go out with the beagles may be gratified to hear that hare-hunting is of great antiquity, known some three centuries before the Christian era, when not only hounds but nets were used. In these days poor puss has an agreeable choice of deaths—the beagles, the poacher's snare, the sportsman's gun, and the grey-hounds.

'The Coney from the sandbank  
Has run a rapid race,  
Through thistle, bent, and tangled fern,  
To seek the open space,  
And on its haunches sits erect  
To clean its furry face.'

So sings Hood ; and Tennyson writes—

‘The rabbit fondles his own harmless face ;’

and these two seem to be the only instances in which Bunny figures in poetry ; but an important place in fairy lore ought to be assigned to the White Rabbit whose acquaintance Alice makes in her trip to Wonderland. Rabbits are not popularly supposed to have any dealings with the supernatural, yet the miners at Wheal Vor in Cornwall affirm that a white rabbit invariably appears in one of the engine-houses before a fatal accident, and, though often chased, has never been caught. Rabbits and mines seem rather oddly connected. Addison, in his ‘Dialogues on Medals,’ speaking of a Spanish coin, on which is struck the figure of a goddess with a rabbit lying at her feet, says : ‘There are learned Medallists that tell us the rabbit may signify either the great multitude of these animals that are found in Spain, or perhaps the several mines that are wrought within the bowels of that country, the Latin word *Cuniculus* signifying either a rabbit or a mine. But these gentlemen do not consider that it is not the word but the figure that appears on the medal. *Cuniculus* may stand for a rabbit or a mine, but the picture of a rabbit is not the picture of a mine.’ The exasperated Australians and New Zealanders who are literally brought to the verge of ruin by the plague of rabbits on their sheep runs, may, on the principle that the misfortunes of others are soothing, find some consolation in the knowledge that, according to Strabo, some of the faithful subjects of Cæsar Augustus were so seriously inconvenienced by Bunny’s presence that they actually demanded troops to exterminate him.

We have all heard of ‘catching a weasel asleep,’ but perhaps we do not all know how, according to Giraldus Cambrensis, the saying first arose. ‘A weasel having brought out her young into a plain for the enjoyment of sun and air, an insidious kite carried off one of them. The mother, concealing herself with the remainder of her family behind some shrubs, grief suggested to her a stratagem of exquisite revenge. She extended herself on a heap of earth, as if asleep, within sight of the plunderer, and (as success always increases avidity) the kite immediately seized her and flew away, but soon fell down dead by the fatal bite of the revengeful animal.’ The weasel has the

honour of being twice mentioned by Shakespeare, both times with reference to his amiable habit of sucking eggs—

‘The weazel Scot  
Comes sneaking, and so sucks the princely egg.’

‘I can suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs.’

The ermine had in bygone days rather a magnificent reputation. From all impurity it fled with loathing.

‘I will disclaim,’ said Cowper, ‘and from your proffers fly  
As from vile dirt the snowy ermine.’

‘*Malo mori quam fœdari*’ (‘Better die than be sullied’) was the motto on the ermine device which was borne by the kings of Naples and Castile, and there was also a Breton Order of the Ermine, with the same device, which was adopted by ‘la petite Brette,’ the Duchess Anne, the twice-told Queen of France; and a Breton ballad speaks of ‘little sharp Kate, the ermine.’ The old fancy was that, if an ermine were surrounded by mud, it would rather suffer itself to die than defile its fur. Its purity is noticed by Murrell—

‘In fair Elysium to endure  
With milk-white lambs and ermines pure.’

And its fur was used for royal and noble robes, to signify how pure should be their conduct. ‘At one time,’ says the author of ‘Historic Devices,’ ‘it was the only fur represented on coats-of-arms, and was the natural white, with black tail-points—

‘Tipped with jet,  
Fair ermines, spotless as the snows they press.’

The mole had his health drunk by the grateful Jacobites as ‘the little gentleman in black velvet,’ on account of a molehill having made William III.’s sorrel stumble, and thus indirectly cause the death of the Hero of Nassau. The otter is the attribute of St. Cuthbert, the Northumbrian saint, having, it is said, licked him into life when almost perished with cold and exposure. The wicked mother otter in the ‘Water Babies’ ought not to be forgotten—she who tried so energetically to get Tom out of the lobster-pot, with a view of making a dinner of him, and finally met her fate therein herself. The

skin of an otter was long supposed to be an infallible preservative against accidents by flood and field, and soldiers and sailors were therefore fond of wearing it. The badger peeps out of his hole on Candlemas Day, and if he sees snow comes out, but if the weather is fine and mild, draws back. Phineas Fletcher mentions a superstition about it—

‘So where the neatest badger most abides,  
Deep in the earth she frames her prettie cell,  
And into halls and casulets divides ;  
But when the stinking fox with loathsome smell  
Infects her pleasant cave, the cleanly beast  
So hates her inmate and rank-smelling guest  
That far she flies and leaves her loathèd nest.’

The friendly beaver who helped Hiawatha will recur to the memory of all lovers of the Indian saga ; and old Drayton speaks of their English habitat—

‘More famous long ago than for the salmon’s leape,  
For beavers Tivy was, in her strong banks that had  
What else no other brooke of Brittain nourished ;  
Where Nature, in the shape of this now-perisht beast  
His propertie did seeme to have wondrously exprest ;  
Being bodied like a boat, with such a mightie taile,  
As served him for a bridge, a helme, or for a saile.’

The squirrel was another friend of Hiawatha’s. When he went fishing for Mishe-Nahma, the King of Fishes, the squirrel accompanied him, and did all he could to help him ; wherefore, when the exploit was achieved, Hiawatha thus addressed him—

‘O my little friend, the squirrel,  
Bravely have you toiled to help me ;  
Take the thanks of Hiawatha,  
And the name which now he gives you,  
For hereafter and forever  
Boys shall call you Adjidaumo,  
Tail-in-air the boys shall call you !’

Charlotte Smith has some pretty lines upon him—

‘Though plumeless, he can dart away,  
Swift as the woodpecker or the jay,  
His sportive mates to woo ;  
His summer’s food is berries wild,  
And last year’s acorn cups are filled  
For him with sparkling dew.

Soft is his shining auburn coat,  
As ermine white his downy throat,  
Intelligent his mien ;  
With feathery tail and ears alert,  
And little paws as hands expert,  
And eyes so black and keen.

Soaring above the earth-born herd  
Of beasts, he emulates the bird,  
Yet feels no want of wing ;  
Exactly poised, he dares to launch  
In air, and bounds from branch to branch  
With swift elastic spring.'

An old Norse legend represents him running up and down the ash-tree Yggdrasil, between the Death Eagle on the top and the dragon Méhlöge, who is coiled at the roots, striving to make mischief between them.

No little creature could, to the uninitiated, appear more harmless than the shrew mouse ; and yet our forefathers held it to be of so baleful and venomous a nature that, if it crept over a human being, or any animal, the victim suffered great anguish, and became paralysed—a belief held by Aristotle, Pliny, and Agricola, and hardly extinct even now. To guard against such lamentable consequences our ancestors used to thrust a live shrew mouse into a hole bored in the centre of an ash-tree, and securely plug it up. The tree then became a 'shrew-ash,' and the smallest portion of it was efficacious in averting the evil wrought by the terrible little animal, of whom the ancient Egyptians alone did not think badly, considering it the representative of Latona, and carefully embalming it.

The dormouse, whose main association with most of us is his appearance at the tea-party in 'Alice in Wonderland,' which concluded by the Hatter and the March Hare amicably collaborating to put him in the tea-pot, is in Red Indian beast lore, a very important personage. 'Once upon a time,' says Mr. Robinson, 'a dwarf, annoyed by the sun, persuaded his sister to make a net out of her hair, and going out to the edge of the prairie next morning, he caught the sun as it was rising, and pinned it down inside the net to the ground. Prodigious was the consternation in Nature when the sun did not rise, and long and serious the pow-wow of the beasts. But at last the venerable dormouse (at that time the largest of all animals, and the Ulysses among them) guessed what was the matter, and

going to the edge of the prairie released the luminary. But in doing so it was shrivelled up to its present size.' 'It has,' adds the same writer, 'the capacity for fattening that endeared the dormouse to the Roman epicures. Their "gliralia," or dormouse parks, were most expensive and costly erections, planted with oaks and nut trees for the sustenance of these small deer, who, as required for the table, were caught and put into jars provided with every sort of mouse luxury.'

The mouse, the 'wee, sleekit', cowerin', tim'rous beastie,' has had a good deal of attention bestowed upon it by old Topsell, who, though he styles it 'ye vulgar little mouse,' tells us of one at least whose education had been carefully attended to. 'Albertus writeth that he saw in Upper Germany a mouse hold a burning candle in her feet, at the commandment of her master, all the time his guests were at supper.' Bulleyn, physician to Henry VIII., gravely recommends that 'a small young mouse' roasted should be given to a child suffering from some nervous disorder, as likely to cause a cure. We are all acquainted with the proverbial church mouse, and Æsop's mice are probably well known—the town and country cousins, the mouse who fought the frog, the more celebrated one who freed the lion, and those cautious little rodents who were not to be deceived even when pussy hung herself upon a peg and feigned death; but perhaps we are not so intimate with Hans Andersen's delightful mice, with their enjoyment of the king's state dinner—mouldy bread, bacon rind, tallow candle, and sausage; of the competition among the four lucky mice as to who should make the best soup from a sausage skewer, and be rewarded by becoming queen consort; and of the ingenuity of the last competitor, who announced that nothing was wanting to make the most delicious potage in the world of the materials enjoined except that it should be stirred when boiling with the tail of the king. 'The water seethed and bubbled. The mouse king approached the hearth; it looked very dangerous. He stretched out his tail as the mice do when they dip their tails in the cream jug and lick them afterwards, but this time his tail got no further than the hot steam from the pot. The king sprang hastily down. "Of course you shall be my queen," he said; "there is no doubt about that. As to the soup, it can stand over till our golden wedding, this time fifty years, when it can be given to the poor of my realm, that they may have something by which to remember the occasion."'

The rat hardly strikes one as worshipful, but the Egyptians and Phrygians deified him ; and to this day the people of Bassora and Cambay forbid his destruction. The Romans, according to Pliny, thought seeing a white rat forboded good fortune. They are not animals which commend themselves to our artistic proclivities as suitable for decorative purposes ; but apparently Proserpine thought differently, for the border of her veil was embroidered with them. It was a soothing belief of old times that rats might—in Ireland at least—be rhymed to death—a belief mentioned by Ben Jonson, Sir Philip Sidney, and Shakespeare. One wonders whether a German band or an energetic organ-grinder would have the same gratifying effect now ? ‘ St. Gertrude of Nivelles,’ says Mr. W. Jones, in his ‘ Credulities Past and Present,’ ‘ is the patroness of rat-catchers, and in the Ardennes, when rats become unusually troublesome in a house, it is sufficient to write the following words on morsels of paper, which must afterwards *be well buttered* : “ Rats et rates, vous qui avez mangé le cœur de Sainte Gertrude, je vous conjure, en son nom, de vous en aller en la plaine de Rocroi.” ’ There are other forms, but all that is essential is to adjure the rats, or the great king of the rats, to ‘ remember ’ St. Gertrude. In the crypt of her church in Nivelles there is a well the water of which is sought for by the peasants of all the surrounding country, since, sprinkled in the house, or over the fields, it will drive away all rats and mice. Earth from the tomb of St. Ulric, at Augsburg, has the same virtue. It is necessary to name a place to which the rats who are to be expelled can retire, and to take care that if there be any running water in the way there is a bridge over which they may pass. They should also be adjured to pass onward in long procession by threes and threes.’ Swift, in his Epistle to Mr. Nugent, alludes to the well-known belief that rats quit a sinking ship—

‘ Averting . . .

The cup of sorrow from their lips  
And flee like rats from sinking ships.”

And the animal has the honour, in common with Captain Boycott and Messrs. Lynch and Burke, of having originated a new verb—to rat. The rat-catcher of the present day, even though he have a pretty daughter, is not considered a heroic personage ; but it may not be generally known that the rat-



killer was an admiring epithet bestowed on Phoebus Apollo himself, in consequence of his having destroyed a swarm of the creatures with his arrows.

Rats are not exactly poetical creatures, yet two great poets have honoured them by making them the subject of their lays. We all know the story of 'Hamelin and the Pied Piper,' as told by Browning.

Southey tells us the story of the Mouse Tower, near Bingen, where, as a Yankee was once overheard to inform his companion, 'the rats chewed up the Bishop.' This Bishop, Hatto by name, had granaries filled to overflowing with corn, while in a long, wet season the poor starved. Day after day they came to beg some little from his abundance, and day after day he refused them. At last, wearied with their importunity, he—

'appointed a day  
To quiet the poor without delay :  
He bade them to his great barn repair,  
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced such tidings good to hear,  
The poor folk flocked from far and near ;  
The great barn was full as it could hold  
Of women and children, young and old.

Then, when he saw it could hold no more,  
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door ;  
And while for mercy on Christ they call,  
He set fire to the barn and burnt them all.

"I' faith, 'tis an excellent bonfire," quoth he,  
"And the country is greatly obliged to me,  
For ridding it, in these times forlorn,  
Of rats who only consume the corn."

But the next morning—

'as he entered the hall,  
Where his pictures hung against the wall,  
A sweat like death all over him came,  
For the rats had eaten it out of the frame.

As he looked there came a man from his farm :  
He had a countenance white with alarm ;  
"My lord, I opened your granaries this morn,  
And the rats had eaten all your corn."

Another came running presently,  
He was as pale as pale could be ;  
"Fly ! my Lord Bishop, fly !" quoth he,  
"Ten thousand rats are coming this way,  
The Lord forgive you for yesterday !"

"I'll go to my tower on the Rhine," replied he,  
"'Tis the safest place in Germany :  
The walls are high and the shores are steep,  
And the stream is strong and the water deep."

Bishop Hatto fearfully hastened away,  
And he crossed the Rhine without delay,  
And reached his tower, and barred with care  
All the windows, doors, and loopholes there.'

But he could not keep out the rats—

'For they have swum over the river so deep,  
And they have climbed the shores so steep,  
And up the tower their way is bent,  
To do the work for which they were sent.

They are not to be told by the dozen or score ;  
By thousands they come, and by myriads and more.  
Such numbers have never been heard of before ;  
Such a judgment had never been witnessed of yore.

Down on his knees the Bishop fell,  
And faster and faster his beads did he tell,  
As louder and louder, drawing near,  
The gnawing of their teeth he could hear.

And in at the windows, and in at the door,  
And through the walls helter-skelter they pour,  
And down from the ceiling and up through the floor,  
From the right and the left, from behind and before,  
From within and without, from above and below,  
And all at once to the Bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,  
And now they pick the Bishop's bones ;  
They gnaw the flesh from every limb,  
For they are sent to do judgment on him !'

BARBARA CLAY FINCH.

*OF RIVERS AND STREAMS.*

PERHAPS there is nothing in all nature that exercises so great and wide a fascination as water—above all, running water.

It has a charm all its own, it offers a companionship of which one is never weary, it adapts itself to all moods, it is the repository of the secrets of centuries. To those who wander with open ears in the Garden of God the river has much to tell; it has its cool draught for the thirsty soul as well as for the drooping flowers; to the country dweller it says one thing, to those who spare time to hearken in the rush of town life another.

It links past and present, country with country, nation with nation, inasmuch as it bears the great ships inland and itself flows at last into the ocean.

Let us suppose you live in the country in the neighbourhood of a river—a modest river but navigable.

The day has been tiring and trying, and you wander down to the river, for there it is at least cool. If you are young and active you step into your boat and pull up stream till the very exertion has refreshed you, and then you fasten your boat to the old alder stump where last year the reed-piper nested, and lie back in the stern to rest and think.

The water splashes musically against the keel of the boat as it rocks gently in the stream, the river flows strongly and quietly past.

There are plenty of little side eddies, naughty little ripples that will play round the big stones, little cross-currents that try to make tiny whirlpools and disturbances. Still in time they are all gathered into the broad, strong sweep of the river, carried onward to the great catholic sea. And as you listen to the water, murmuring around you, and watch the easy, quiet strength with which it overcomes all difficulties, going steadily on its way sweeping aside obstacles by sheer force of perseverance, the day's wrinkles smooth themselves out of your

troubled face. Mrs. Brown's ninth baby, the irreclaimable poacher, the hardened drunkard, the crass ignorance you have encountered in the parish, or perhaps the rucks and jars of home-life, the misunderstandings and difficulties—one and all they disappear, or at least assume their proper proportions, and the stream carries you homeward rested and satisfied, you yourself perhaps hardly know why.

Or we will suppose you are elderly—living out of the rush of work and energy. Your feet, too, turn to the river, and you wander along the banks a little restless, a little sore perhaps, for others are doing the work you had planned to do and not exactly as you would have it done.

You stroll along in the quiet evening light, and you, too, notice how strong and steady the stream is—'Never hasting—never resting.' The grass along its banks is green, the flowers fresh and sweet—that is all in the day's work. Then the river makes such wonderful curves—you could cross from point to point in a minute while to go round takes five. No, it is not waste of time; there is reason in it all, and a short cut too often means neglected duty. The quiet murmur of the water is very restful, very healing. You feel you have a companion—one who will make no mistakes, touch no tender spots. Presently you come to the 'Silent Pool,' where the river takes a wide sweep. Here the fair white water-lilies lie on their broad, green leaves and wait for their lover the moon—for then, says an old legend, they open their silvery leaves and bloom in the soft, white light fairer far than beneath the sun's hot rays; and then, too, the buds rise out of the cool water and the moon kisses them into bloom and fragrance.

Near by are the plump little yellow water-lilies—a sort of third order in the sisterhood, but by no means to be despised, especially with a background of those great blue-eyed forget-me-nots and tall feathery meadowsweet. The river still sweeps on its way, but the pool is undisturbed, it lies out of the current. They say it is very deep—no one knows quite how deep—and it has its hidden tragedy. You gaze down through the clear water, following the thick lily-stalks—a forest where the solemn old carp sail in and out while the jolly little perch chase each other through the maze. You cannot see the bottom, that is one secret of its stillness.

See how the clouds are mirrored on the surface, and how it reflects the evening glow. You would find small pleasure and

profit in standing for a quarter of an hour with your head thrown back watching the sky, but here at your feet you have it all—faintly, imperfectly perhaps, but still beautiful.

After all, may not your life be something like this pool? Still, because no one can penetrate the depths of the peace of God; fair, with fragrant flowers of hope in you, it may be, unfulfilled but blossoming afresh in others; a place of rest and refreshment, out of the stream of life and work reflecting back, though faintly and imperfectly, the image of God.

You, too, go home comforted—across the common towards the little town where the red roofs lie glimmering in the evening shadows, and the old grey church stands out clear against the fading sky.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the most constant and happiest memories of my childhood is the little brook in the home field. I suppose it was not a very nice or a very clean little brook, but in manufacturing neighbourhoods that is hardly to be expected, and to me in those days it mattered not at all.

Where it had its source I know not; it came out of a little cave in the side of the hill, and one bank was always higher than the other. I once sought to penetrate this cave, but with dire results in the shape of bed before dinner and no pudding—so little sympathy have one's elders with the thirst for research! Just beyond the cave the brook was quite a respectable width, even my big boy cousin fell into mud and disgrace when he tried to jump it; also there was a little gravelly beach at least a few inches square, where we launched our boats of hollowed elder-wood. Soon, however, it narrowed,—it could even be stepped over! Still it was all very exciting and delightful. There were two perilous rapids over which the boats had to be guided, and various boulders, for the brook was a brave little stream and had hollowed its bed out of very rocky soil. Further down was the bridge—one flat stone dragged thither by the herculean efforts of the whole family. It was unnecessary, but a triumph. A little below this feat of engineering skill the brook widened again before disappearing under a flagged tunnel into the neighbouring field.

Here, in this shallow spot, we built our aquarium. It was not altogether successful, because whenever it rained the

beasts were all washed out ; but then there was always the joy of restocking it.

Under one of the banks lived a fat frog, for whom I entertained great respect. We used to sit and gaze at each other in silent intercourse till he got bored and flopped into the river with a splash. It must be confessed he was most interesting when engaged in catching flies.

But it was the brook itself that was my chief and dearest companion. How it chattered and sang and told me of the little goblins that lived under the hill, for of course I had read 'Curdie,' and of the fairies that danced on the grass on moonlight nights and scolded the pale lilac milkmaids who would live close to the water, so that even fairies cannot get their milk unadulterated in these unregenerate days. Then, too, it used to tell me many wonderful things not to be put into words—for who can translate the mysteries of a child's imagination ? I think some of those strange things linger in my life still.

Once I explored the flagged tunnel, but again defeat met me in the shape of a family of ducks athirst for new scenes and worms ; mutual consternation and flight ensued, and I never succeeded in following my dear brook into its new surroundings, so I traced it only in imagination till one fatal day when a well-meaning but mistaken elder pointed me out a magenta-coloured stream, steamy and uninviting, which flowed past the great cloth mill, and kindly explained that it was our brook. So that was the end of it all ! Born with the little trolls under the hillside, and in the end a receptacle for refuse dye ! Truly we live in strange times.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are two or three streams I have had only a casual acquaintance with, so to speak, which yet have their place as friends in my life.

One is a Devonshire stream, and I made its acquaintance one spring when the fields along its banks were golden with Lent lilies.

I do not even know its name ; it had its source up among the old grey tors, and doubtless in its infancy had a hard fight for existence. When it arrived on the plain it was quite a respectable stream, though nowhere navigable. I do not think it even turned a mill ; it just flowed along and

watered the flowers, and made things bright and pleasant for other people—not a thing to be despised in these utilitarian days—and it has left a bright picture in my life of blue sky, yellow bells, and clear, rippling water, and a few whispered secrets which have not been forgotten.

Then there are the East and West Dart. How they come rushing and tumbling over the boulders in their anxiety to meet each other! Who has not felt a little thrill when watching from the old grey bridge how the waters met and then hurried rejoicing on their united way? The great grey boulders lie in their course still; it is if anything, rougher and more uneven than before; but now they have one path, one aim, and double strength to meet all obstacles.

All the Devonshire streams are full of life and strength. They chatter cheerily over the stones, they toil bravely to hollow out their bed. They do not know what lies before them, but they never shrink, they hasten towards the duty that awaits them. What secrets some of them could tell if we could only listen! Strange, horrible tales out of the far-away past of the worship of the false god and all it entailed, when blood perhaps stained the clear water, and horrors were perpetrated of which even the lapse of centuries cannot blot out the remembrance. Tales of feud and warfare, of solemn council, of martial gatherings; pretty stories, too, of fairies and pixies that our eyes are too dull to see, and of queer little hillmen with their strange ways and terror of human beings. The banks, too, are bright with tormantil, blue with forget-me-not, rich in treasures of soft, starry moss. Their water is clear, cool even in hottest summer. They rise under the shadow of the everlasting hills, and their goal is the sea.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sometimes a river and canal flow for a little way side by side. The river sweeps along in the course it has made for itself, it dashes over the weirs, knows no obstacle, no hindrance. The old canal flows solemnly along with scarcely perceptible motion, heavily laden with barges following a course cut at the will of another, no obstacles to fight against, no excitement but the locks which follow each other in monotonous succession.

Sometimes kind Dame Nature lays a few lilies on its dull, olive-brown surface or scatters the starry Fair Maid of France

the despair of inspectors ; but this is not often—generally the canal sees life from its sternly practical side.

We could not spare either—the burden-bearing canal, the strong, free river ; but we are mostly hard on the canal.

\* \* \* \* \*

You, however, are no lucky dweller in the country, you have no brook to chatter to you. You live in a great, busy city—London perhaps. Still, I say, go and listen to the river.

Old Father Thames was there long before the stately Abbey, before the Houses of Parliament, before the most primitive of our buildings. One thing on his banks may be coeval with him, perchance older—I mean Cleopatra's Needle, the bringing of which to London to be eaten away by the atmosphere and smoke is one of the scandals of modern times, of which one would have hoped only a Goth or a Yankee would have been capable. Save for this Father Thames reckons the most years.

He is muddy now, you say, dirty very, smelly rather, interesting not at all.

But then poor Father Thames was not always like this. You and your civilisation are to blame that he is dirty and smelly, laden with awkward barges, busy tugs, important, snorting little steamers.

In the old days he was clear and clean, and bore the king's painted galleys on his broad stream. He flowed dark and sombre by the Traitor's Gate, he carried ill-fated queens, brave prelates, loyal as well as disloyal knights to their last resting-place in the Tower from which it was but one step to the block.

These are all thoughts out of the past ; the river has its present message too.

Come down to the great city wharfs where they are unloading the ships.

Oranges ! The air reeks of them ; bananas, figs, dates, nuts, pine-apples ! These were packed in Spain, Italy, Tangiers, or elsewhere ; and you are the first to see them since they ripened under Southern skies, and were plucked by sunburnt peasants and borne to the ships.

Here are fragrant spices, sugar, huge cases of ginger, cinnamon, vanilla. Drugs, too, gum arabic, all sorts of strange, wonderful substances hidden and revealed.



A little further on we find a meat ship—New Zealand mutton mostly, packed in ice.

There they are unlading dried fish—with that you have had enough.

Has the river brought you no message with all these things?

Does it not cry out that you are no solitary unit with your joys and your sorrows, but stand in daily, hourly relationship, not only to other people, but to other nations, other lands? That you have to thank a foreign sun for your ripe fruit, foreign labour for many of your comforts, that you are pre-eminently a citizen of God's world not only of your own native country?

Come on to London Bridge—our Bridge of Sighs—before we part.

How many have willingly sought refuge from their cares and troubles in the cold, grey arms of the river!

What drove them to this dreadful, comfortless resting-place? What grim spectre was behind that they nerved themselves to the fatal leap?

Life is very real in London; it is not painted in the fair, glowing colours of the country, green grass, blue skies, waving trees, a river that brings peace. It is painted in hard black and white, it is full of most unpleasant realities, but the voice of the river has to be heard all the same.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let us not bid the river farewell in the shadow. After all this life is only a prelude, an ante-chamber. We pass on to where the "rivers and streams make glad the city of God," where the message shall ever be one of life, peace, satisfaction. Only if we do not listen here how shall we understand hereafter?

---

*ON A PRIORY TERRACE.*


---

A TOWER, where once cowed watchmen stood  
 And monks kept ward 'gainst Robin Hood  
 (The outlawed terror of their lands),  
 In solid stateliness still stands.

A grey square mass with lancets slit,  
 From whence the jackdaws snarl their wit ;  
 While at its base beneath the sod,  
 The dead await the trump of God.

Beside the tower grows one tall tree,<sup>1</sup>  
 Robed once a year in majesty  
 By Spring, who bridal glories weaves  
 Above the nesting thrushes' eaves.

A spire of misty glistening white  
 With winding stairs of waving light ;  
 A guileless Babel Tower, whence rings  
 The voice of hosts of winged things

Who pleasure there : a royal tree  
 Dazzling in virgin purity ;  
 About whose foot smile merry flowers,  
 Children of April gleams and showers.

Around the Tower faint echoes sigh  
 The dirge of sad mortality ;  
 But from the spire the winged choirs sing  
 The praises of the Eternal King.

LAURA E. RIDDING.

<sup>1</sup> A Bird Cherry, nearly as high as the tower.

*THE MAIN CHANCE.*

BY CHRISTABEL R. COLERIDGE, AUTHOR OF 'WAYNFLETE,' 'THE TENDER  
MERCIES OF THE GOOD,' 'THE PROPHET'S MANTLE,' ETC.

---

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## MR. FISHER OF DEWSBURY.

IN the octagon room at Waynflete there was a cupboard in the panelled wall in which sundry old deeds and papers belonging to the estate had always been kept. None of them were of romantic or recent interest ; they were chiefly copies of old leases, records of sale and of purchase, to which Mrs. Waynflete had added the accounts of the various stages by which the property had come once more into her possession.

A few days before Christmas, while Florella was still at Ingleby, Guy went over to Waynflete with the intention of verifying the boundaries of Flete Head and Lady Well as to which, at one part, there was some little dispute. The old 'terrier,' which he knew was in the cupboard, would settle the question. This was the reason he gave himself, and as daylight was valuable he left Ingleby by the first train in the morning, and sent orders for a horse to meet him at Kirk Hinton ; so that it was early on a clear and sunny day when he rode down the hill into Flete Dale, over the bridge that crossed the river and up again towards the Hall. The air was still, and the rush of the rapid brook was almost the only sound to be heard. The silence of winter was on the land.

His short escape into youth and mirth was over, and in the solitude his face, showing the deep anxieties and unsolved perplexities that were weighing upon him, looked pale and worn. Here, too, where he had now and again met the spectral apparition of the evil influence of his race, he felt with renewed force its unseen presence within him. Here,

where face to face he had once encountered with his bodily eyes the terrified and treacherous eyes of that which had seemed to him at once his own likeness and his evil genius ; here, though nothing blurred the clear sunshine, though no one stood on the hillside before him, he seemed to hold dispute within himself with That which once he had seen ; here, especially, the place for him and his was haunted. His brother had fled from it, shaken it from him, and with it its mysterious influences. These were left for the one who had stayed.

Guy looked straight before him. 'If you will stand upon the path before me,' he said, 'I'll pass and leave you behind me. Come if you can.'

But the path was clear. Either an extra faculty was lost or a strange disease cured.

'Nay,' he said. 'You're not on the bridge or on the hill. I wish you were ! You'll never speak in thunder nor in spiritual earthquakes, but with a still, small voice.' He thought how, in the agonies of that former contest, in that duel of wills which had then seemed like a physical fight, he had struggled towards the vision of Florella's face ; now there was nothing but the memory of her few words—

'It may be hard, but it is quite simple to do right.'

After all, not the battle of Armageddon, not the trump of Doom could have any other object than that right should triumph over wrong.

Guy reminded himself, he answered the voice within him, that, after all, he came as a conqueror. Fear and failure had been beaten down, trampled under his feet. He had held on to all, he had lost nothing, he had not lost himself. Here he rode up to his own hall door—strong, sane, sober, yes, and so far solvent too—he who had once looked ruin and drink and madness in the face.

'I have won—you have lost,' he said, and he smiled as the thought came to him—

'He who fights and runs away  
Shall live to fight another day.'

The old rhyme jingled in his memory like the queer burlesque of a mocking answer.

'More arrows still in your quiver,' said Guy in retort. But he checked himself. Mockery was a tool with a sharp edge.

He soon reached the house, and was met by the couple who acted as caretakers for him. The man took his horse, and the wife told him she had made a fire in the octagon room as well as in the library.

'You were best take a look round, sir,' she said; 'there's a broken slate or two up yonder. It comes through in a storm, the water do, and there'll be damage done one of these days.'

'I will look round,' said Guy, 'outdoors and indoors. Show me everything.'

He went through farm and stableyard, over barns and sheds and cowhouses, into the gardener's cottage and the coachman's rooms, in and out of greenhouses and gardens, in by the back door and over kitchen and servants' hall, down into the empty cellars and up again into every room in his house, noting in his pocket-book every defect that he could discover. Here, in the shabby, picturesque drawing-room nearly ten years ago now, he had first seen Florella—a kind-faced, clear-eyed, cheerful child. Here, in this little slip of a bedroom, he had twice 'seen the ghost.' He paused to recall the abject terror of that first experience, the disgrace, the shame of it. He could feel now the splash of cold water with which the indignant Godfrey had deluged him. Here, in the little octagon room, he had stood with Florella before the picture of his namesake Guy; and she, all ignorant of what she was doing, had promised to pray for him. Here he had seen his great-aunt's death-bed, and here, when the great battle was over, his Florella had given him herself.

'If *that* could come again to you, it shall get through my soul first,' she had said as she gave herself into his arms.

He had but half understood her then, in his new joy and his happy love, and he had done his best to hinder her fulfilment of a pledge which he did not believe her to understand either.

That was not what was wanted of his darling. He wanted to forget, to ignore, all that had made him unlike other men. He was going to protect her and to make her happy, not to owe to her protection for himself.

Who shall say that he was wrong? But even now, when she had taken the outworks by storm, and when he had perforce allowed her to 'know,' did *he* know?

In making himself 'as fit as other men' to be her lover, was it possible that he had evaded the call to such a soul-union as other men could not know?

It had been so with religion. Deep in his soul lay the memory of profound experiences, but these were connected with all that he had overcome, and he shut a door between them and the ordinary dutiful practice of daily life.

Had it been meant that all that he had conquered should leave him 'the same as other men'?

He looked at the two pictures—at the uncertain, pathetic face of the 'Guy who had been too late,' and at the strong, shrewd and successful countenance of his great-aunt Margaret, whose standard he had set himself to fulfil.

Then, for he had time before him, and the map which he wanted could be easily found, he went down into the library, and throwing himself into a chair by the fire thought that he would wait and have luncheon and a smoke before he unlocked the cupboard. He sat still; perhaps the warmth of the fire after his journey and his ride in the cold, fresh air, and the fatigue of his long inspection of the house, made him drowsy, for he remained still and passive while dreamlike images impressed themselves on his mind. He saw in his mind's eye, and he lived through in his mind's experience, the legend of the first Guy Waynflete, who had betrayed his friend, saved his property and lost his life. Of course he had always known what this first recorded Guy Waynflete had done, now he knew why he did it, nay, he seemed to do it himself.

Since his friend was sure to be discovered and taken, why not speak the word and save the little valley and the house and the barns and the bags of money hidden away there, and go home to the fair wife and bonny boy waiting for him? Guy felt the choice tremble in the balance, and then—and then—the thing that was not the right thing was done, and he rode home to Waynflete, his own Waynflete, safe and sound, crushed his pangs of conscience and, as he led his horse to the ford, he met *himself*, the traitor in other men's eyes and in his own. And he fled from himself. His descendant knew what it was to fear himself. At length his body lay in the bed of the river and his restless soul could not escape from the place he had bought so dear. He saw his son, handicapped by his treason. He saw the downfall of his posterity. He could not even warn them by showing them, as he had been shown, himself, for the few who could see fled in horror and fear. Cowards all!

'Warn us ?' answered the living Guy in his dream. 'You dragged us after you, you come of evil.'

'Till you can look yourself in the face and defy yourself you are a coward. Yourself I am.'

'Well, I have looked you in the face and passed you, what do you want of me now ?'

'Look again.'

And Guy seemed to himself to look and saw not the abject creature of his earlier visions, but the same face, cunning, shrewd, and keen, with a hand that clutched the title-deeds of Waynflete.

Then the spell broke, and Guy started to his feet. He laughed out loud, and turning to the old mirror of the chimney he stared at himself.

'Behold it was a dream,' he said ; ' what is the interpretation thereof ?'

The meal he had ordered appeared ; but he could not eat much of it, and without waiting for his rest and his smoke he hurried up into the little octagon room, now all filled with levelling sun rays. He unlocked the little cupboard in the panelled wall, and, taking out the tin box which he found there, unlocked that also, and spreading its contents on the table sat down to look for the map of the district.

He soon found it, and satisfied himself that though there had been some cross-letting, the field known as Vale End had originally belonged to Lady Well Farm and not to Fletehead. Guy put the map aside, and turned over the other papers. None of them were documents now in force, but they witnessed to the past history of the place, and it struck him that it might be interesting to examine them more carefully than he had hitherto done, and see what price had been originally paid for the farm which he was now thinking of selling. He found the old lease of Lady Well, the latter part of which had been bought by Mrs. Waynflete, and found that it contained after the list of outbuildings, fields and crofts, the rights in subsoil, in minerals under the surface, carefully enumerated. On the back the document was endorsed in the formal business handwriting of his great-aunt's husband, Thomas Palmer : 'Mining rights after investigation found to be absolutely worthless.' Then followed in quotation marks a short technical statement of the reason why. 'Report made in 1859 by Mr. James Fisher, from Dewsbury.'

'Well, I always knew that I' thought Guy, flinging down the parchment. 'Wickham knows about it too ; he knows that was the old opinion.' He got up and walked over to the window and stood in the sunshine, staring across the valley. He knew exactly what the right thing was to do, in fact the only thing that a gentleman could do. He must show this old paper to Maxwell Mervyn and ask him to reconsider his offer.

Then Maxwell Mervyn would laugh and say that new science was better than old and he preferred to go by Mr. Wickham's investigation. That would be all. No, not quite all. That must be done at once. But if it was done twenty times over the conviction in Guy's mind would not be changed.

It was still possible to refuse to sell either the land or the shares.

But then ?

The right thing was not simple at all.

Guy put the map and the lease of Lady Well into his pocket, locked up the remaining papers in their old quarters, and went out. He was possessed by a sense of crisis, accounted for by nothing external. It was still quite early in the afternoon, and he went through the gardens and a little higher up the hill till he came to the old church, long, low and grey, crouching among the heaped-up gravestones as if it too lay and slept.

Guy got the key from the old sexton and went into the dark, heavy Norman aisle, where the air struck cold and the winter sunlight entered only in partial gleams. He walked round like a stranger, and visited the tombs of his forefathers.

There was an old stone just inside the west door with a new inscription, cut by his own order two years ago. 'Too late,' had once been the only legend on the grave of that Guy who had been waited for in the octagon chamber in vain. Now his name, parentage, and date of birth and death were there instead. He went over each recent tomb even to the handsome modern brass in front of the chancel step, recently put there in memory of Margaret Waynflete. Last of all he came to the obscure corner where in letters which had never been renewed, on a black marble tablet held up by gilt cherubs, was the name of Guy Waynflete, and the record of how he had been found drowned in the Flete, July 30, 1685. Under the feet of his descendant presumably his bones lay.

Guy looked from the grave of the man who had kept Wayn-



flete to that of the man who had lost it, then he turned and walked right up to the altar steps, threw himself on his knees and buried his face in his hands. Then there rose in his mind one definite thought not new to him, but newly clear and sure. 'You will never lose Waynflete.'

'Will you keep it? At any cost?'

'No,' said Guy aloud, 'not at any cost, but if I give it up I shall not have given in.'

He knelt on with hidden face; his shoulders shook and his fingers were wet with tears. At length he rose and went out into the setting sunlight with his mind made up. 'I shall go straight to Wickham and show him this extract. That's the next step.'

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE POWERS OF THE AIR.

'AND so,' said Guy, 'as I have never been without misgivings, I thought the straightest thing was to bring this old paper to you.'

He was sitting opposite Wickham, having gone straight to the latter's house from the station, and now looked full at him, not with the peculiar searching glance that Wickham knew, but with an absolutely open gaze, as if he were not thinking of himself at all. Something had left, something had come into his face since they had met last.

'But, my dear fellow,' Wickham said, 'I can't help it if I don't agree with Mr. Fisher of Dewsbury in 1859.'

'That is just the difficulty,' said Guy. 'It seems to me that it would be most unfair to you to act upon this, and I couldn't expect Mervyn to take any heed of it.'

'No? You see the thing is practically settled by the formation of the Company. You could refuse to sell Lady Well or part with your own shares, though I must say I think you are pretty well pledged to do so. But I really don't see that the course of events could be changed if you published this in the *Rilston Chronicle*. You might make people rather uncomfortable, and me very much so. But my report has been accepted as a basis of operations.' Wickham's tone was good-humoured, though not without dignity.

'I want money very much,' said Guy, after a pause.

'So do I,' said Wickham with a shrug, but a watchful look. Did his visitor know why? But there was no look in Guy's face of having caught an admission. Florella had kept the secret.

'You see,' said Guy, as if he was saying the most obvious thing in the world, 'I told you that I should know if you tried experiments upon me, so I found out some time ago that for some reason you wished me to think that my coal was worth money. The night after we talked about it at Waynflete I dreamed about the coal, I saw it, quantities of it, under the soil, "thick, black, and level"; afterwards you used those expressions in speaking of it. And besides, I have always known that you tried to impress on me the idea of that coal. You did at the meeting in my office. I told you I should always know it. But I am quite sure that the coal is not good.'

'Well,' said Wickham, 'suppose I did, as we agreed, try an experiment on you, that isn't to say that I wanted to swindle you?'

'It was a mistake to take that subject to experiment upon. Let me finish my say, and then you shall have yours. My great-aunt left Waynflete and half the business to my brother because she thought I was a weak fool, and should let slip what she had gained. She had, you know, "restored the family."'

'I know—yes?'

'Well, Godfrey didn't care for the place. I did, and he gave it into my hands. It was all legally done and the equivalent of its rents, for the first year, was to be paid to him. Well, never mind details—but both on the estate and on the business a good deal of capital was required to be spent to do either justice. My brother, as you know, withdrew last year on terms that were to my advantage; I have never had capital enough even to run risks. If I had the money down for Lady Well and my shares I could get along, otherwise either the business must go—or Waynflete.'

He was extremely pale, and made no attempt to conceal the sorrow in his eyes. Something held Wickham silent.

'Now it is inconceivable,' Guy went on, 'that I should sacrifice the good old name of "Palmer Brothers," to which our possession of Waynflete is owing, for any consideration on

earth. And I will neither make a dishonest use of our credit nor lose it because I can't afford to do justice either to customers or workpeople. I have made up my mind to sell all the Waynflete property. I can't afford to do it common justice.'

'But—that seems a great sacrifice,' said Wickham, so much impressed by his companion that for the moment he hardly thought about himself at all.

'Yes,' said Guy, 'it is a sacrifice. But I now feel, what of course I always knew, that the conquest of our family disgrace does not consist in keeping possession of the family estate. The disgrace was first of all incurred in keeping that tight.'

'Perhaps we could get on better if I quite understood what you mean,' said Wickham, still in great surprise.

'I should like to make you understand,' said Guy, still with that full, simple gaze. 'I think that a taint, a bad influence—we needn't discuss now how far I am justified in attributing personality to it—has been inherent in us, a taint of cowardice and greed. This was defied and scotched by undoing its visible results. But it can only be destroyed by the redemption of our own souls from it, not necessarily of course by relinquishing the property, but by putting that in the second place. I see things now in different proportions. Leaving Waynflete will not break my heart; I am not beaten.'

'But what do you want to do?' said Wickham, after a minute.

'I shall keep Lady Well till I sell it with the rest without regard to the mining rights,' said Guy.

'And the shares?'

'Well,' said Guy, 'of course I can only answer for Lady Well and Fletehead. The Company may be all right. There may be more coal in Ousely and on Kirkmoor. There *may*; I'll not sell, but I'll give no reason.'

'I think you want sharp eyes to see any sharp practice,' said Wickham, offence growing in his tone.

'Some jam was necessary in my case to wrap up the powder,' said Guy, with a momentary resumption of his usual manner. 'But,' he added, 'I appreciate the temptation and could never again sit in judgment on any man.'

Wickham experienced a curious confusion of purpose. His usually rapid judgment did not work. It would have been natural and perhaps prudent to take the line of indignant

offence with Guy's implied suspicion, or of friendly desire to overcome his foolish alarm, but he found himself thinking of Florella's knowledge of his antecedents, of her generous warning, of Guy's deliberate refusal to spring a march upon him. Would it be better to tell Guy what she knew? And how strange his action was! Wickham could not get hold of his own purpose. When he spoke he meant to temporise and give himself time.

'I should not have thought,' he said, 'that *you* would have responded to attempts at suggestion. Miss Vyner always strikes me as being a person of much more developed psychical temperament than yourself.'

Guy sprang to his feet. Face and voice changed in a moment.

'That's what I won't allow! No one shall dare to experiment upon her!' he said. 'For that I should have no mercy. None!'

When Guy was angry he never swore or shouted. None of his subordinates had ever heard an oath from his lips. He could frighten them sufficiently without such an expedient.

Wickham rose also, astonished, but freed. 'Good heavens, Waynflete!' he said; 'what's the matter? I meant no offence. We have discussed the question often enough. Now I think I may ask you to tell me how much you mean to imply by all you have said. Do you want the Company to get a second report from another expert? They can of course, and if it does not confirm mine, choose between us. But you must call another general meeting.'

Guy looked at him again, and then spoke in an odd, slow way, as if he was thinking out his ideas. 'I beg your pardon; what you say about Miss Vyner is quite true. That is why I dislike her to be mixed up in these matters. But she always knows what is right. I shall take at present no steps about the Company unless—by your wish. If I do, I will give you notice.'

Wickham was a very clever man, of fine enough fibre to follow the workings of Guy's mind, even while he was thinking how to baffle him. He took a daring step.

'I am going to tell you my history,' he said. 'I don't pretend that I should do so if you were not certain sooner or later to hear it. Probably it will confirm you in your doubts, but I can't help that. When I was just twenty-one my father,

a stockbroker, failed in a disgraceful manner. He was also trustee for the children of a relation, and had made away with their fortune. Their relations on the other side intended to prosecute. I offered to give up a few thousand I had of my own, and to pledge myself to pay interest on the rest of the sum and to make it up before the boy came of age. The circumstances were as bad as they could be; my father would certainly have got a long sentence, and I preferred starting in life with another sort of handicap. The responsible person was their grandmother, and she accepted my offer, which of course was an uncommonly good one for the children.'

'I hope I should have made it in your place,' said Guy.

'Well, I was bound to my undertaking by every legal safeguard. I went to America; had luck, worked hard, made one or two successful hits. My father was immensely successful till he went too far. However, there's a sum still to be made up, the boy comes of age in April. If I don't produce it then they may still be down on the old man, sell me up, and practically ruin me. So you see why I wished to realise on my shares.'

'Surely,' said Guy, 'after so splendid an effort on your part they couldn't be such brutes.'

'I don't know. The grandmother is dead, an uncle is now the responsible person. I have always been held to the letter of my agreement.'

'Is that all?' said Guy, after a silence, during which he had still kept his wide-open eyes fixed upon Wickham.

'Yes,' said Wickham, rather jerkily—'yes, that's all; you wonder why I have told you. Miss Edgell, Miss Vyner's friend, is my cousin. She has told her our story under other names. Miss Vyner has divined my identity. I made no attempt to deceive her. I could not. Miss Edgell herself doesn't know about my agreement to repay the money.'

'How do you know all this?' said Guy sharply.

Wickham laughed.

"When a felon isn't engaged in felonious affairs," he quoted, 'he is, as Gilbert somewhere remarks, very like other people; I—well—I've been rather on the road to making a fool of myself—and little Miss Fielding has been very ready to help me. You know, I see, what turned Miss Vyner's attention on to me; she thinks I'm a dangerous deceiver of her friend, but she warned me that she held a trump card. She did not play it.'

All that's off the present point ; the question is, What is the upshot of all this ? You can't seriously think that a report made forty years ago can be set against one made now in the light of modern science ? If this is produced in this stick-in-the-mud place it will make people hang back, and if another report is asked for it will cause delay. You may make your mind easy. I see exactly where Mr. Fisher of Dewsbury was led into error. But people are not logical ; if you produce this publicly you'll do a lot of harm and—no good. Look here, I'll explain to you.' Wickham spread out the old report on the table and proceeded to indicate the technical differences between that and his own.

'It's worth my while,' he said, in frank tones, 'to dispose of your scruples instead of resenting them.' He placed the alternatives of concealing or producing the paper before Guy, till it was difficult to say which he was advocating, but he made his case over again till it appeared that the scruples of which he spoke were futile and foolish.

'Yes,' said Guy, when he had finished. 'But you're not telling the truth. You know as well as I do that there's no coal worth getting in Flete Dale. It's to the interests of both of us to say there is. You and I both want the money we should get for letting people think so, but it isn't worth while selling our souls for. We are living souls, whatever you think. Take my word for that. If you can't, it's not worth your while to think of yourself as you think of your father ; besides, if we join together and resist the evil I am quite sure we shall pull through. I will help you. I have influence and friends. I will undertake to get more time for you to carry out your undertaking. And for myself, I understand now what has to be done. I never did before ; it does not matter about Waynflete. There is something better even than the business ; nothing is impossible or too hard for a man. I know that, you know, from actual experience. Now I don't even feel the temptation, and I can drag you through it—I can indeed.'

As Guy spoke he still looked at his companion with an entire absence of self-conscious doubt. He dominated him by a force which Wickham at heart thought he understood, and which he found almost irresistible. His own weapons, he believed, were turned against him.

'We can plan out what to do,' Guy went on. 'I will save your reputation. I can manage that.'

Was he not really in Guy's power? Was this an appeal to self-interest only, an offer of the most astoundingly easy terms to a detected scoundrel? Was the game up at last? He was confused, he wanted time to think. But something else within him felt the appeal. It was more than an offer to save him from consequences—it was a call to a change within. What had he best do, and who was this appealing to him? Surely in another moment he should see Guy's keen eyes, hear his trenchant voice pointing out that he had no chance but to agree to the terms offered.

Both men turned and started, as, before he had resolved to speak, there was a summons at the house-door, and Cuthbert Staunton's voice was heard asking in hurried, anxious tones if by any chance Mr. Waynflete was with Mr. Wickham.

*(To be continued.)*

---

## THROUGH PINK GLASSES.

---

I THINK it was Mr. Henley who complained the other day about the lack of demand for books of verse. I have no doubt he was justified, but poetry continues to appear in quantities not appreciably reduced. Mr. Conan Doyle is one of the latest to yield to the temptation of collecting his fugitive songs, some of which we have seen on occasion in the magazines. I notice the announcement of his forthcoming volume under the name 'Songs of Action.' The title is rather reminiscent of 'Songs of Energy'—a book of verse published some time ago by another popular story-teller. The patriotic vein, stimulated by the 'Admirals All' of Mr. Newbolt, is presumably responsible for Mr. Conan Doyle's new work.

\* \* \* \* \*

The 'Rhymes of Ironquill' represent the bulk of my poetical reading for the last month or so. 'Ironquill'—whose real name is Eugene Ware, of Topeka, Kansas—enjoys a considerable reputation in America, where he was 'discovered' some time since by Mr. Howells, the distinguished novelist. 'Ironquill' is not the only poet for whom Mr. Howells has performed this useful service, but he is one of the best. Some of his verse is very good indeed, and he has a pleasant inclination to the humorous. The book is selected and arranged, with a discreet eye to the taste of the British public, by Mr. J. A. Hammerton, who also contributes a rather grandiloquent 'appreciation' of his author. It is curious that it should so often seem necessary for American writers to be introduced to a British audience with these florid prefaces. Is the same thing done on the other side of the Atlantic?

\* \* \* \* \*

A very admirable book of its kind—and that not at all the ordinary kind—is 'The Mermaid of Inish-Uig,' by R. W. K.



Edwards. A story runs through the book, as good a story as need be, original, powerfully conceived, and with a distinct touch of pathos. But the chief charm of Mr. Edwards's book does not lie so much in the plot as in the *locale* and in the manner of his writing. He is evidently at home in this wild corner of the British Isles—I imagine it to be suggested by Tory Island—and he has succeeded in producing a picture of the place and its simple inhabitants that rings very true indeed. Mr. Edwards seems to possess all the qualities that go to make a good novelist, and he has certainly a keener sense of style than the majority of workers in that field.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have seen it objected to this book, that the story is obscured by unnecessary and irrelevant detail. The fact is rather that reviewers (who are very much the children of convention) often find themselves somewhat at a loss when called upon to appraise a book that does not conform exactly to any ordinary standard. 'The Mermaid of Inish-Uig' should not be judged as a novel, nor yet as a volume of sketches, but as something combining the chief merits of the two. Personally I have no sort of objection to digressions, except when I am reading a book for the sake of the story alone. I presume, of course, that the author is capable of making his digressions interesting. To my mind, Mr. Edwards is at his best in the delineation of the lighthouse keeper—a character only incidentally concerned in the plot. And the undercurrent of story (though excellent in itself) is not of such a nature as to cause the leisurely reader any undue impatience. It is no bad thing to be able to linger over a book sometimes.

\* \* \* \* \*

I think I have read most of Mr. Frank Stockton's work, and the more I read the more I am forced to marvel at its inequality. I cannot think he is at his best in 'The Girl at Cobhurst,' which I read the other day. With the single exception of 'Rudder Grange,' his novels seem to me to be altogether too leisurely in their method. He does better in short stories, where there is no necessity to fill a certain number of pages. And yet it is hard for Mr. Stockton to be really dull: sometimes he appears to be making strenuous efforts in that direction, but never with entire success. He has the knack, for one thing, of finding extraordinary characters,

and of describing them to admiration. His maiden ladies, in particular, are always delightful. There is one in this volume, who goes far to reconcile us with the tenuity of the plot.

\* \* \* \* \*

Really the plot of 'The Girl at Cobhurst' is one of the thinnest ever seen. It resolves itself, briefly, into a battle between Miss Panney—the aforesaid maiden lady—and an old family cook named La Fleur on the vital point whether a young bachelor who has recently come into the neighbourhood shall marry one very charming girl, or another not quite so charming. The cook's nominee prevails, rather to the disappointment of the reader. That is all. There are some rather pretty love-passages, and there is a certain charm in Mr. Stockton's very deliberate manner, but I cannot think that his latest work will add much to his reputation. What he wants, in order to do himself justice, is a remarkable situation. He can be gravely humorous over any extraordinary predicament; dealing with ordinary life he is apt to be dull.

E. H. LACON WATSON.

*FROM MY ATTIC WINDOW.*


---

**Drama in common life.** WHAT tragedies and comedies and pathos and humour are round us at every step of even the trivial round, and the commonest, most everyday path ! I have sympathy with all kinds and conditions of men, in which of course I include women, but I cannot understand the position of any man or woman having eyes and ears who persistently finds life featureless. Of course there are tired grey days in almost every life, when the sparkle is gone out of things, when Robin Adair (or his equivalent) is gone from the dull town—days when one just has to keep on and do the work that must be done and hope for the sparkle and the interest to come back to-morrow. But those days are not normal, they are due to a variety of causes—anything, in fact, from a torpid liver to the sailing of an Orient liner. It is the life of the man who sees nothing in other lives as they are being lived which is incomprehensible to me. Why, there are dramas at every street corner, only most people never see a play unless they are sitting in rows before a drop-scene. There was a short paragraph I read a few days ago, and the scene it conjured up has not left me. It was a paragraph saying that an election of candidates for the British Home for Incurables took place in a certain hall in the Cannon Street Hotel. All round the room were tables each with its group of anxious-eyed ladies and a large placard, "Vote for ——" some candidate for the home. And the patient candidates who could not come out to woo their electorate, stayed at home and waited. All that day, and perhaps some days more, they lay and wondered whether they would be among the chosen few to go from their squalid, hopeless cheerlessness to the bright picture they had conjured up for themselves. All they asked was a place to die in decently and in peace. One candidate's name was withdrawn during the contest, for one incurable had just passed

beyond the need of votes and had reached the other side of death. It was an everyday sort of occurrence, but the picture of all that it meant to some folk stuck in my mind as a sample of the little things which mean such big things to those behind the scenes.

As a set off to the sadness I saw another trifle which any one can see who looks. It was only a girl in a railway carriage on our little country line. She sat opposite me smiling and smiling and smiling again with a sort of glad look in her eyes. At last I caught myself smiling too. It was infectious. She saw me, looked across and apologised; 'I can't help it, ma'am, I'm going to meet my husband. He went off to sea the week we was married, and his ship came in last night, after three years away.' At the terminus he was on the platform, and put his bronzed, honest British face in at the window. I could not help seeing their meeting, and who could have helped smiling and feeling one's heart beat quicker too at the memory of the gladness of the boy and girl husband and wife? It was just another bit of drama—a scrap of the last scene when the curtain comes down. And any one may see these scraps of real life drama copied from the stage any day if they walk with open eyes. Seeing and understanding and sympathising, who can think this little life of ours lacks feature?

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Sphere** Even the most ardent champion of her sex will allow that there are positions, offices, and places which women are not particularly fitted to adorn. Despite the modern tendency to hew down the landmarks which mark the boundaries of sex, there are still a few which seem likely to remain. These prove that although sweeping generalisations which give to one sex all one set of virtues or another one set of vices are false, there are certain characteristics which, speaking broadly, do generally attach themselves to men as men or women as women. And these general lines are those which serve, or should serve, to mark those positions or offices which either sex should occupy. No one doubts the capability of a few women to act as police, army generals, street scavengers, or sea trawlers. But no one seriously suggests that these positions should be occupied by women. The normal woman, even allowing the tendency of the times full scope, is not gifted with the particular qualities likely to

make her a success in those capacities. But there are a few offices under State control which ought obviously to be given up to women ; for example, the State reformatories. "Mothering" qualities of any kind are inside the broad line which I conceive marks off the general characteristics of woman. And mothering includes judicious punishing ; and to inflict punishment which shall deter from wrong and not harden is a science. The Government is most anxious to do the best it can to prevent juvenile crime. But those most competent to judge—governors of prisons and others who have to deal with the criminal of older growth—have given it out definitely as their opinion that reformatories for boys managed exclusively by men are not a success. Discipline, it is true, is well maintained, every effort made to administer even-handed justice ; but when the time comes for the youths to go out into the world it is found that their characters have not been re-moulded, their minds not bent away from the evil induced by birth and lack of training. Who so fit to plant the seeds of "the expulsive power of a new affection" in young, practically motherless boys as a good, strong-hearted, wise woman ? The suggestion has been made before that women should be asked to try their hand at this class of work, to take entire charge of reformatories and schools for young criminal boys. I hope it will again. But this illustration serves my point that it is best to regulate one's ideas of what is woman's sphere, as the old phrase has it, not by precedent, but by principle. And that that principle should have for its basis the qualities of the normal, not necessarily the average, woman. It will be found that in public life and in private too there are still many positions which might with advantage to every one be held by women. But, of course I am prepared for this principle, as well as its application, to be overturned and trampled on by the discerning British public.

\* \* \* \* \*

**A Reported  
Conversa-  
tion.**

The ink with which I had written the general enunciation of my theorem on the subject of the limitation of women's sphere was not dry when I came across a fragment of a conversation which the Hon. Lionel Tollemache had with Mr. Gladstone. It is strangely apposite and has more than a passing interest, if only as an opinion of a strong man who had strong opinions on everything. I give it without comment, with the silence due to our great dead.

Of the rights of women Mr. Gladstone said that he was 'disposed to open the professions to them, but to exclude them from the franchise; if they were once given the franchise, it would be hard to prevent their having everything else':

T. What do you mean by 'everything else'? Do you mean that they would want to become members of Parliament?

G. Yes; and to become judges and generals.

T. But, surely, if they want to become generals, they would be told that they were, owing to physical causes, unfit for the army.

G. Oh, but they would answer that, if they were physically unfit to become generals, they never would or could become generals.

T. Yes; this is the kind of argument which Mill illustrated by saying that no law was ever passed forbidding men with weak arms to become blacksmiths.

G. One concession, however, I would make to them. It seems to me perfectly scandalous that, out of the vast incomes of our two Universities, not a sixpence has ever been given to a woman.

T. Would you have women made professors?

G. There might be difficulties about that. But they might be helpful in other ways. As compared with men, they are handicapped in the race of life; and they certainly ought to have their share of the University revenues. I remember urging this on Lightfoot at the time of the University Commission; but he thought that it would be too fundamental a change.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Oriental  
House-  
keeping.**

Domestic life in Persia is evidently full of entertainment—of a peculiar kind. But Miss Sykes, the sister of the British Consul in Kerman, had the gift of seeing and appreciating this particular form of amusement. She has written a most pleasant book on her life in Persia, and incidentally takes us 'below stairs.' The servant question there takes a unique form, and results in lively situations. Servants in the Consul's household were all on board wages, as they generally are in the East. But there was this peculiarity which Miss Sykes points out: 'As soon as our servants were settled down at Kerman each man started a "slavey," who, as far as I could see, did the entire work, for which he got no money but was fed with our food as payment.' This is sweating, certainly, and at first sight seems like thieving. But, as

Hashim, the head waiter, explained when charged with theft, 'It is not stealing to take food, as the more of his master's food a servant eats, so much the stronger he is to serve him' ! Which was subtle if not convincing. But fortunately food is so cheap there that if, owing to any of those causes which seem to operate in a mysterious manner on the price of bread in England occur often, we shall all be able to live in luxury under the Shah. Meat and bread under a penny a pound, eggs ten a penny, chickens twopence each, a whole though small lamb fourpence halfpenny, vegetables *ad libitum* for a penny a day—these things sound Arcadian to housekeepers and mothers with a large selection of hungry boys.

Fashion in Europe is said to be autocratic, but fashion in Persia is itself the slave of an autocrat, and he a mere man. According to Miss Sykes, the late Shah arranged the present hideous dress of Persian ladies, which has a short stiff skirt and a large expanse of white stocking, on a scheme of his own. And this scheme was born in Europe of his admiration for the ballet dress, which he conceived to be the model of all grace and beauty. Imagine our sensations were our future monarch to insist on English women wearing some fancy garb he had admired on a visit to Utopia. But even there individual taste has room for making variations on the original theme. A lady of high rank in Kerman, who visited Miss Sykes, exhibited a somewhat startling effect, 'When her outer wrap was slipped off the mistress disclosed an emerald-green velvet jacket, trimmed with bands of vivid purple, sky blue silk gloves embroidered with red roses, completing a curious discord in colours, while her headdress was a piece of stiff book-muslin, fastened under the chin and flowing behind, giving a nun-like look strangely at variance with the rest of the toilette.'

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Medical Woman.** The London School of Medicine, which is the nursery of the English woman doctor, has entered on a new lease of life this year. It is twenty-four years old, and from being a puling infant with a precarious existence, it has grown into a sturdy, hardy maturity. Who would have dared to think thirty years ago, when Miss Elizabeth Blackwell and Mrs. Garrett Anderson, who had gone abroad for privileges denied them in England, were working to influence the authorities to allow a few girl students to enter for English medical examinations, that in 1898 there would be close on a hundred

qualified medical women practitioners in London, as many more in the provinces and England, Scotland and Ireland, a number growing every month in India, and that in the women's medical school in England there would be a hundred and seventy-four students, to say nothing of those in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin ?

And now the students have outgrown their old house, and big new premises with appliances and dissecting-room and laboratories and even decoration up-to-date are being erected. The old corner house in Bloomsbury, with its dark rooms and creaky boards and makeshift arrangements, has served a generation of students, and seen much hard work and heard many aspirations, and perhaps some disillusioning. But now by its side, overlooking the same old garden, has risen one big new block, which will be far healthier and more convenient and better in every way ; though it will have its history yet to make, and will have no memories of pioneers or the days when the girl medical student was a fearful and wonderful experiment, to be gaped or even hooted at. The medical woman now, whether your private opinion approves or condemns her, is a recognised institution. Even royalty has sealed her as orthodox by its presence at the medical school, though I have not heard that professionally she has been summoned to any degree of royal ailment. But the life of the lady doctor is not a playtime. Besides the ordinary strenuous work of her profession, she still has to fight the deep-seated prejudice of the old-fashioned public, which dies hard though it is dying. Her path is not only made thorny by the awesome intricacies of professional etiquette, but by the anxiety lest by any false move or rash step she endanger not only her own reputation but the future of the movement of which she is a part. But given the long list of necessary qualities which go to make her a success, the medical woman is a force which very silently but very surely is making for more good than we know of yet.

ANNIE GROSER HURD.



## The China Cupboard.

ARRANGED BY CHELSEA CHINA.

---

(For the regulations of all 'Monthly Packet' Competitions, see p. 120.)

---

### FIRST SHELF.

#### VARIETY SUBJECT.

O the old wall here ! How I could pass  
Life in a long Midsummer Day,  
My feet confined to a plot of grass,  
My eyes from a wall not once away !

---

A most fascinating set of papers has been produced by the Garden Wall. *Enots* gives us the birds and insects to be found on it, *Doronicum* the ferns and the snails. *L. E. L.* investigates the wall down to the very derivation of its name, and *Fa-ik*, a new correspondent, gives us a particularly pretty piece of description. We think *Winifred Spurling's* weeds the most likely to be overlooked, and, as they are excellently observed and described, she takes the prize, *Enots*, *Doronicum*, and *Miranda* coming very close.

---

#### THE GARDEN WALL, AND WHAT YOU CAN FIND ON IT.

Visions crowd upon me.

Country garden walls made beautiful with great clumps of red and white valerian, polypods, and poppies.

High garden walls seen in childhood, laden with fruit, sun-kissed green-gages stained rusty-red.

Old garden walls, tangles of jessamine, honeysuckle, roses, and clematis.

College garden walls, with coveted botanical specimens on their venerable summits.

Our present garden wall, no fruit, few creepers—save those of the animal kingdom—but an interesting collection of weeds and insects.

To enjoy this last kind of garden wall one must be one's own gardener.

No man would tolerate weeds on a wall if he had the weeding of the paths and beds beneath.

It is the weeds I shall write about ; the insects have had their turn, except a family of glow-worms, who arrived on the 13th of last October, the wives making phosphorescent stars in the ivy as they went snail-hunting at night.

Through the ivy on the top of the wall smiles the dandelion ; to pull it up would be putting out sunshine.

Where not covered with ivy, the wall is in a dilapidated condition ; whole bricks have crumbled away in places, soft green patches fill up the gaps, chiefly moss and the annual meadow grass, *Poa annua* ; the air is not pure enough for lichens to thrive.

The moss is beautiful ; when old it turns red, and looks like the down on a baby's head ; the new growth is covered with hair-like threads ending in minute green or orange swellings.

Lower on the wall are the two pearl-worts, *Sagina apetala*, and *Sagina procumbens*.

The violet flowers of the ivy-leaved toad-flax, *Lignaria Cymbalaria*, peep from out the tufts of grass. On another garden wall I saw one of Nature's happy combinations, a mass of the large celandine, *Chelidonium majus*, and hanging from it long sprays of this toad-flax.

The neighbourhood of fields supplies our walls with all the common weeds, such as groundsel, shepherd's purse, the common chickweed, *Stellaria*, and the spring mouse-ear, and the viscid mouse-ear chickweed, *Cerastium*, the thyme-leaved speedwell, *Veronica serpyllifolia*, scentless mayweed and common fever-few, *Matricaria inodora* and *M. parthenium*, also clover.

Others less common, such as trailing St. John's-wort, *Hypericum humifusum*, the climbing buckwheat, *Polygonum convolvulus*, bristly ox-tongue, *Helminthia echinoides*. These three plants, together with the pretty spurge *Euphorbia peplus*, and the common annual sow-thistle, *Sonchus oleraceus*, make themselves at home on a brick ledge that juts out from the base of the wall.

Amongst the wall-hawkweed, *Hieracium murorum*, the wall-wort *Parietaria*, and stone-crop, *Sedum acre*, on the top of the wall there appeared one year the square-stalked willow-herb, *Epilobium tetragonum*, a dry place for such a moisture-loving plant to choose.

Seedlings from our own and other gardens have come on the wall, sometimes evening primroses ; at the present moment there are self-sown larkspurs, 'dogs,' wallflowers forget-me-nots, and a violet root.

I was puzzled by wheat, flax, and some strange-looking grasses that began sprouting out of the crevices, until I remembered the mixed bird-seed that I had spread on the wall for the birds in the winter.

Now I am trying to induce to grow wall-penny wort, *Cotyledon umbilicus* (the seeds brought with me from Cornwall), the house-leek, *Sempervivum lectorum*, and the rue-leaved saxifrage, *Saxifraga tridactylites*. Yards of this last pretty little flower is out on a wall in Eltham ; I could not resist stealing a plant, it is only two inches high.

I have made no mention of the various trees that spring from the wall, but they are numerous. I have pulled up enough hawthorns and sycamores to stock a nursery. A large sycamore in the next garden overhangs part of our wall ; it is difficult to get anything to grow under its shade, but the wall is studded with rusty nails, relics of a bygone glory. I was wondering if long ago roses clambered here, when my eyes fell on the plant of rue in the border beneath, which I set, not like the poetical gardener, 'in the remembrance of a weeping queen, but to mark a cat's grave. This made me picture the nails once helping to 'give some supportance to the bending twigs' burdened with 'dangling apricocks.'—WINIFRED SPURLING.

#### THE GARDEN WALL, AND WHAT YOU CAN FIND ON IT.

There is a garden wall that I know which seems to me all that a garden wall should be. For one thing it is in the middle of the garden instead of having one side in and one side out as is the fate of most garden walls. This fact gives to it a look of friendliness and sociability denied to a wall that is obliged to stand like a sentinel, barring the way into an earthly paradise. Sociability is indeed its chief characteristic.

In itself the wall has no claim to beauty, being built of hard, dark, cold, grey stone ; an uncompromising material, exhibiting none of the soft shades and modulations of colour such as one can find in old brick, or

in stone of a lighter grey, which attracts to itself the beautiful yellow lichen.

But the wall is wise enough to know its own imperfections, and although the lichen has denied it its aid many another thing has been persuaded to cover its bareness.

For all wayfarers through the garden—man, beast, bird, insect, or plant—the wall has an irresistible attraction, sooner or later, for longer or shorter periods, they are all drawn to it. One side of it is given up to fruit trees, which clothe it with pink and white in the spring, and with golden and ruddy fruit and leaves in the autumn; but its other side and top are at everybody's service. There is a cushion of grass along the top, rather tawny and dried-up looking, ivy-leaved toad-flax runs amongst it and hangs in garlands down the side. Yellow stone-crop disputes with the toad-flax for a place. A bold dandelion and a modest daisy grow side by side; here is blue forget-me-not, and there a plant of snap-dragon. A flourishing gooseberry bush has taken up its abode there, and a plant of sage has mounted from its bed below to have a better view. There is yellow hawk-weed and white dead-nettle, and sometimes a stinging-nettle too. There is sturdy green ivy and delicate bind-weed with pink and white bells, ox-eye daisies and buttercups, mint, and thrift.

These are resident guests of the wall, but others are coming and going continually. Somebody comes there to arrange their flowers, or somebody to read or to eat fruit, or do nothing but look round and think how beautiful it all is. A little dog, with wistful brown eyes, sits sometimes for hours on the wall wondering *why* people will persist in digging in a place where he has distinctly told them there is neither rabbit nor rat. The birds as they pass alight for a minute on the wall to see if there is a caterpillar or lady-bird handy. The fledgelings find on it a place to recover from their first flight and get courage for a second. Gay butterflies hover over it or balance themselves for a second upon it. Laden bees make the wall's top a resting-place. It is the thoroughfare of busy ants and idle lady-birds, hurrying earwigs, and slow snails.

These are some to whom the wall gives a welcome, and doubtless there are many more; but the wall is the only one who can stand still, every one else must move on; and so we must leave it basking in the sunshine of a May morning, with myriad forms of life going on around it.—FA-IR.

---

#### PRIZE WINNER FOR MAY.

Miss Winifred Spurling, 14, Kidbrook Park, Blackheath.

---

#### VARIETY SUBJECT FOR JULY.

Name the three novels published during the last three years which you prefer, giving your reasons for choosing them.

---

#### SECOND SHELF.

#### CHARACTER STUDY FOR JUNE.

'One of the Old School.'

Chelsea China has to make humble apologies for the omission of the Subject for Character Study for the June number. The mistake occurred between herself and the Search Question Editor, and as they have both been taken up with illness in the house, she trusts her kind friends will excuse them, and will all send charming descriptions of 'A Maiden of Our Own Day' in July.

'One of the Old School' has produced a good variety of papers.

*Firefly* takes the prize for a very characteristic sketch, on which Chelsea China makes one criticism. Surely the lady of the old school never said she was 'very pleased.' That is a modernism. The old lady would have put in *much*.

#### 'ONE OF THE OLD SCHOOL.'

It is the best that lives—in our individual memories as well as in the world's memories—and thus it is the phrase, 'one of the old school,' always recalls to my mind many pictures of charming old people. Perhaps the queen of them all—the one who claimed my heart's best devotion—was an old lady who lived at the end of our street. We always called her 'Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by.'

She was very old—nearer ninety than eighty—but her step had not lost its firmness nor her mind its bright intelligence. Time had fretted his wrinkles on the dear old face, but her eyes shone bright with kindness, and the lines about the mouth told tales of the firmness (or perhaps I should say fortitude) which had enabled their owner in days past to face many a trial and bereavement with courage. All that might have seemed crude was softened by the snow-white curls which framed her face, and over all (her figure and movements as well as her face) was a delicacy as indescribable as the bloom on a peach or the velvety softness of a rose-leaf. She was upright as a dart, and had been brought up when the backboard was *de rigueur*—in fact, one of the two things she could not tolerate in young people was a round back! The other was discourtesy in any form. In her dress she kept to the fashions of her youth—the full skirt and tight-fitting bodice, with its dainty fichu of snow-white lace, white lace arranged mantilla fashion over the hair. Her mantles were chosen with the same care to keep to the old fashions, and her bonnet was a modified coal-scuttle—very becoming to her. Once and once only did I see her in an unbecoming bonnet, which she persisted in wearing in spite of the candid disapproval of her grand-daughters. 'My dears,' she said, with gentle dignity, 'it is always easier to pull to pieces than to make. When you can make a bonnet as well as this, you will have a right to complain of it,' adding with a faint flush, 'Miss Bennett made this one for me and I am *very* pleased with it.' Then we had the clue; Miss Bennett was a poor, shabby milliner whose little sister was blind, and we knew the former was scraping together enough money to send the latter to an Eye Hospital.

Every morning at ten o'clock might my old lady be seen out for her walk. As a rule, she rather prided herself on her ability to walk alone, and did not care for the support of another person's arm (except when, according to her old-fashioned courtesy, it was correct to take an arm). One day, a friend, younger but feebler than herself, who was equally independent spirited, came to stay with her, and my heart swelled with pride for her, as, with charming humility, Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by said, as they were starting for their walk, 'We are getting old now, dear, would you be kind enough to let me rest on your arm?' and so supported her friend's tottering footsteps.

To the last she never lost her sunshiny view of life; she was sought after by all her young friends to share in their gaieties, in fact her bright touch of humour enhanced the gaiety. But with all her kindly fun at little foibles her charity was all-embracing. 'We don't know how much she doesn't do,' she remarked of some one whose misdemeanours were being poured into her ears. Her pets were chosen rather for their misfortunes or other people's misfortunes, than their beauty—a cat rescued from some boys on the common, a linnet found with a broken leg and who had perfect liberty

to fly where he would, some doves bought from a small grandson in pecuniary difficulties, and a dog who had been sold to her at a so-called bargain from a poor man in the street. (His coat had changed colour since his purchase.) But in addition to these she had a host of small pensioners in the birds which flocked to her garden, and whom she fed daily, insisting on the necessity of giving them water as well as crumbs. In the same way flowers found their way to her kind care to be doctored. Everything in her well-stored home had its little history. I never heard her crave for Women's Suffrage; she satisfied her political views by wearing Conservative colours at election time, and encouraging the cause by all her eloquence. Church and Queen were the pivot on which her politics turned, and on all matters which concerned them she was a trustworthy authority.—FIREFLY.

---

‘ONE OF THE OLD SCHOOL.’

He was hard as nails, out working in all kinds of weather; ready to help in any emergency at a moment's notice.

Always a strict observer of the ‘Sabbath day’ and ‘Fast days.’

His was the daily, monthly, and yearly round of unceasing labour.

But he loved his master and his work, consequently it was well and thoroughly done. Latterly his work consisted chiefly in hoeing and raking the walks and making baskets.

He didn't seem to know what it was to want to go away for a holiday.

Soirées, concerts, and Sabbath-school treats, cheap excursions, picnics, and trips, were all alike unknown enjoyments in his parish.

But the members of the congregation of the kirk he belonged to evidently needed no inducement to make them regular in worshipping together Sunday after Sunday in the ‘House of God.’

Regularly as Sunday came round he would put on his suit of blacks, and, wet or fine, would trudge persistently up the hill to his parish kirk, accepting, with childlike simplicity, the teaching of his minister; never dreaming of criticising or comparing unfavourably for a single moment the long and rather rambling discourses, which lasted sometimes well over an hour. The vexed question of the introduction of a harmonium into his kirk didn't come up in his day; perhaps it was just as well for his peace of mind that he never witnessed the triumph of the ‘advanced party’ when they gained their knotty point. But at last the day came when, crippled with rheumatism, and lame from the effects of a bad fall and a broken leg, he was no longer able to climb up the hill to the kirk, as of old; but had to content himself by sitting in the parlour in his black clothes reading his Bible. His Sunday treat in those days was to get my sister to come and tell him all about the sermon she had heard in the morning at ‘the English chapel.’ Though a great sufferer from rheumatism and the effects of his fall, one never saw him anything but cheerful and contented. ‘The Lord's will be doon’ seemed to be his watchword through all his troubles.

His food was always of the simplest. As long as he was able to work out of doors one used to see him at twelve o'clock sitting down contentedly to his dinner of oatcake and cheese, sometimes varied by a ‘drop of broth.’ I see him now, dear old man, with his long white hair and kind, weather-beaten face, as he smilingly used to offer us a pinch of snuff out of his old bone snuff-box, or pat us on the back, saying, ‘Let me clap thae muckle shouthers.’

It used to amuse us how he always kept faithfully to the days of the month by the old calendar.

He used to invite us to come and see him on ‘Auld Hansel Monday,’ and give us oat-cakes and cheese and some sweets to take home.

He used to tell us to bathe our faces in May-dew, and go up a hill on the old 1st of May; that what we called the 1st of May didn't count at all.

On his birthday he would present us with a large bag of peppermints, which he said 'would keep us chawing a' Sabbath i' the kirk.'

He was a most beautiful basket-maker, and used to supply the house and garden with every kind of basket, and went on making them up to a short time before his death. He was also very good at making sticks.

He was born at the end of the last century and died at the age of eighty-five.

His was the life of an honest, simple, God-fearing labourer.—**HOLLY LEAF.**

#### CLASS LIST FOR MAY.

**DISTINCTION.**—*Osborne.* (See last page.)

#### CLASS I.

*E. O. B., Holly Leaf, Miranda, The Brown Bear, Daughter of the Soil.*

#### CLASS II.

*Try Again, Kindness, Scotland Yard, Mrs. N. C.*

#### PRIZE WINNER FOR MAY.

Miss Ethel May King, 49, High Street, Winchester.

#### SUBJECT FOR JULY.

'A Maiden of our own Day.'

#### WHO, WHEN, AND WHERE?

##### SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR MAY.

1. Explain in a few words the meaning of the title, 'the Ring and the Book.'
2. From what sources were the following titles taken? (1) 'Not Wisely, but too Well'; (2) 'The Course of True Love'; (3) 'A Woman's Reason.'
3. What did Kingsley mean by the titles 'Westward Ho!' and 'Two Years Ago'?
4. To what do the following allude? (1) 'A Giant's Robe'; (2) 'In Silk Attire'; (3) 'Grasp your Nettle.' Name the authors of the books so called.
5. (a) 'A Tale of Two Cities.' What were the two cities, and who told the tale?  
(b) 'Below the Salt.' To what custom does this refer?
6. What do you consider the happiest (most suitable) title ever given to a book, poem, or play?

(Only one allowed to each person.)

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS.

1. This is the title of a great poem by Robert Browning. In his introduction to it he explains that he picked up on a book-stall in Florence, an 'old, square, yellow book' which gave the contemporary accounts of, a Roman murder case. He compares the process of turning this story into his poem with that of making a ring. 'As a goldsmith mingles alloy with the virgin metal in order to fashion his ring, Browning presents the varied aspects of his story from the minds of the different persons whom he makes tell it and produces his complete circle.' 'As in the ring, the pure gold had to be dug out and then mixed with alloy to make it malleable, so from the documents in the book Browning first extracted the pure truth of the story, and then wrought the fragments together by the power of his own fancy and living soul into a complete whole.' (*Chelsea China* quotes from the answers of two competitors.)

2. They are all from SHAKSPERE'S works. (1) *Othello*, v. 2. (2) *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, i. 1. (3) *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, i. 2.

3. 'Westward Ho' mean the voyages to the West against the Spaniards made by the heroes of the book, and also the movement of men generally towards the West 'along the great path of the human race' to 'the West, the land of peace, the land of dreams.' (See KINGSLEY'S 'Life and Letters.') 'Two Years Ago' refers to the events of the Crimean War and the visitation of cholera which took place two years before the time of the story, and which influenced more or less all the actors in it.

4. (1) 'Like a giant's robe  
Upon a dwarfish thief.'  
(*Macbeth*, v. 2.)

The book is by ANSTEY.

- (2) 'Ye shall walk in silk attire  
And siller hae to spare.'  
(Old Song—SUSANNA BLANNIE.)

The book is by WILLIAM BLACK.

- (3) 'Tenderhanded stroke a nettle,  
And it stings you for your pains ;  
Grasp it like a man of mettle,  
And it soft as silk remains.'  
(Lines written on a window by AARON HILL.)

The book is by Mrs. LYNN LINTON.

5. (a) London and Paris. CHARLES DICKENS. (b) In feudal times a large salt-cellar (or 'saler') was placed part-way down a long table ; above it sat the family and guests, below the servants and retainers. Hence the expression 'below the salt' is used for a lower position in the social scale.

6. Various titles are of course given. The chief favourites seem to be *She Swoops to Conquer*, 'Vanity Fair,' and a *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Ans. 1. Many competitors speak of the 'old, square, yellow book' as if it were a fiction. The whole story of it, and the finding of it, is true ; and the book itself may be seen at Balliol College, Oxford.

Ans. 4. (2) It is rather hard on the competitors who have found 'In Silk Attire' given as 'anonymous' and 'unknown,' but one extra mark *must* be given to those who have succeeded in finding the author.

Ans. 6. Equal marks are given to each competitor, as the answer is largely a matter of opinion, though C.C. cannot agree with those who have given *Much Ado About Nothing* as a happy title !

## CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

60 : *Cymraes, Double-Dummy, F. R. D., Isabel, Irnham, Mellon Mowbray, Nemo, Sea-maiden, Syndicate, W. Spurling.* 59 : *A. C. R., Dianora, E. T., Helen, The Blue Cat, and one unsigned.* 58 : *A. E. L., Athena, Eleanor, Ellen Vannin, Findhorn, Ur-Wala?* 57 : *Thorshaven.* 56 : *Byxpárea, Malaprop.* 55 : *Trimmer, White Cat.* 54 : *L. J. H., R. V. H.* 53 : *Aspley Guise, Peter.* 51 : *W. Adey.* 50 : *Honeylands.* 49 : *M. R. A.* 48 : *All Fours.* 46 : *Cobwebs.* 43 : *Proserphina.* 40 : *Scott.* 2 : *Virginia.*

*Fourteen Streams* is credited with 60 marks for April.

*W. Adey* lost marks on No. 6, having chosen a verse of *JEAN INGELOW'S* poem with only a name, and no description.

*Isabel* lost marks for the Keats' quotation for the same reason. (N.B.—*Chelsea China* cannot answer questions about the competitions privately.)

*White Cat* was credited with 59 marks. 49 was a misprint. (See answer to *W. Adey*.)

*Lenore* omitted to write 'Search Questions' on her envelope, and cannot be credited.

*The Blue Cat* quotation in No. 6 alludes to the nightingale more than to April and spring.

## SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR JULY.

(*A Seasonable Bouquet.*)

1. Where were found 'Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose'?
2. Who had three lilies in her hand and seven stars in her hair?
3. What flower 'goes to bed with the sun and with him rises weeping'?
4. Where are these lines?—

'Blue flags, yellow flags, flags all freckled,  
Which will you take? yellow, blue, speckled?  
Take which you will, speckled, blue, yellow,  
Each in its way has not a fellow.'

5. What flowers are described as—

'a-tip-toe for a flight,  
With wings of rosy flush o'er delicate white'?

6. A favourite quotation about some flower of the month.

## THIRD SHELF.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—We are well-to-do women, of a certain age, 'in society,' in the places in which we live. Most of us have intellectual interests, and we all wish to be useful to our fellow-creatures. We have, all of us, domestic interests, varying from a pet dog to a husband, but we have all some time apart from them, at our disposal. We should like to sketch out the claims that are made upon this 'spare' time, and to ask you if any one, except perhaps a bishop, could possibly fulfil them all. We are Churchwomen, and most of us have been 'parishy' from our youth. Con-



sequently we should not feel like ourselves if we had not districts or classes or meetings of some sort—those we regard as *home* duties. Besides, if *we* did not do them, who would? Then we should think it quite wrong to neglect Missions at home and abroad, and Religious Education and everything of that sort. In fact, we give at least half a crown to at least six missions each, and each of the six has at least one meeting a year and probably a working party a month. As for Church Reading lectures, of course *we* run them, and must attend them to show an interest in them and set an example. Besides there are Church services and 'Quiet Days,' which last generally happen when we have four other important engagements. Then there are all the societies, called after all the letters of the alphabet. We are presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, and treasurers for several of these, and we have of course to attend their meetings, probably to take the chair, or read papers, or make speeches for them. You see, either we are the persons in the place who ought to, or we know something about the subject, or we can speak so as to be heard—anyhow we are quite sure to have to do it (we generally like it too). Every one of these 'excellent societies' will have conferences, or councils, or committees, or meetings—national, local, or county or diocesan—and as a general rule they will also get up entertainments for their members. However harmless a society may seem at first, it is almost sure to lead to an 'outing' in the summer and 'social evenings' in the winter. And very often they have them every week. That is to say *we* have them. It is our own doing. Nor is one ever sure that entertainments and bazaars may not have to be got up to obtain funds. And of course that falls on *us*, and the cleverer and more amusing, or the richer and of more consequence we are the more trouble we have to take.

Then, not only is it a very bad thing to let the world think that people who are devoted to good works are stupid; but it is extremely important to have a variety of interests going on in a place, and so we cannot neglect the lectures—University, Ambulance, Hygiene, Cookery, Dress-making, which go on in sets; besides that of course if single ones are got up, by people we know, it is only civil to go and listen to them. And then a good many of us have political convictions, and whether it's Primrose or Women's Franchise, it all takes time and energy. And then, of course, besides what is called Society, we have constantly to drink tea and lunch with each other to settle our plans.

Now we are sure that every one will regard this as quite a moderate statement of what a 'lady of all work' may have to do, because we haven't included *official duties*, such as being Poor Law Guardians, or any kind of professional or paid work whatever, and we want to know what to do about it.

Because, if we were frivolous, and went in only for gaieties, we should not be half so dissipated. We run on till we drop. Either we have an illness and go abroad for the winter, or we go and live in a new place and get a holiday for a few months before the new people get hold of us, or we get into a 'dumb-driven-cattle' state; and as for thoughts and convictions—if we hadn't any before we began our careers, we shall never have any now. We have to do things and think about them afterwards.

Now it's all very well to say, 'Give up what has the least claim on you.'—We should like to know what has. There's the claim of being the person that *must*, the claim of being the person that *ought*, and then there's the claim of being the person that *can* and last, but we think not least, that of being the person that *wants* to do it. Please thresh the matter out, dear Chelsea China, and save from distraction a—LADY OF ALL WORK.

## AT THE FOREIGN LIBRARY.

I do not presume to give advice to those who are really readers of foreign books; but I believe there are many people who would like to 'keep up' their foreign languages by perusing a French, German, or Italian book every now and then, but who are prevented from doing so because they do not know what to read, and fear to fall on some novel of the Zola type. So the idea of a foreign book is put aside, and by degrees their languages grow so rusty it is too much labour to read one at all.

If any such reader, or, rather, non-reader, wishes for quite a simple little French book, I should say, get 'Petite Belle,' by Fleuriot. It begins with a pretty description of an old brother and sister, secondhand book-sellers in a French country town, to whom comes the very unwelcome task of being guardians to a young heiress, who has been left to run wild, uneducated, and spending most of her time fishing with an old boatman. We will not spoil the story by telling it; but it has a certain originality and plenty of movement.

A good Italian pendant to this is 'Bianca Romualdi,' by F. Guerini, published by Natale Battezzati, Milan. Only this is rather more sensational, as an Italian book is almost bound to be. However, the supposed murder turns out to be no murder at all, and all ends happily. To any one that knows Italy the descriptions of rose-filled, sunlit gardens will bring back many lovely memories. It is a pleasantly written book, with a religious, but of course Roman Catholic, tone.

Now for the German volume to keep them company, and here I confess I am not up to date. I have just been myself wandering once more through the German edition of F. Bremer's 'Das Haws,' and very charming still is the good old favourite. Let those who have not read it, read it; and those who have, read it again; it will stand another perusal. Let me finish with one word of warning.

It is hardly ever safe with a foreign author to suppose that, because one book he has written is good and charming in every way, therefore the rest will be the same. A great authority on the subject reminded me of this only the other day, and it cannot be too often repeated.

LAURA F. WINTLE.

May I add one word? Much has truly been said about Miss Yonge's influence over girls. May I say that invalids are much indebted to her during the weariness of illness for just the pleasant, refined society which they are deprived of in a sick room, and for which the 'Detective,' 'Hypnotic,' or 'Sex Question' novel do not supply any equivalent. These have their uses no doubt, but Dr. May, Fitzjocelyn, and many of our own favourites are *real friends* of our own rank, education, and sentiments, though we may not always agree in every point.—GRAY SQUIRREL.

Would M. K. S. be so *very kind* as to let 'Gray Squirrel' (Miss E. N. Paget) have the proverbs about the months? She is very anxious to collect anything of a prophetic nature in the way of proverbs.—29, The Boltons, S.W.

## BOOK NOTICES.

*In Answer to Prayer* (Isbister & Co.). This little book contains very interesting papers from men of different schools of thought, including Canon Knox Little and the Dean of Salisbury. It is very prettily got up, and would make a nice present for a thoughtful girl.

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

JAPAN. I. AS IT WAS.

QUESTIONS FOR JULY.

25. Give some account of the races of Japan, past and present.
26. How was Christianity introduced into Japan in the sixteenth century?
27. What were the causes and what the means of its suppression?
28. What survivals of Christianity were there from 1637 to 1858?

Books recommended:—*Classified Digest of S.P.G. Records; Under His Banner* (S.P.C.K.); "Japan" in the *Story of the Nations Series* (Fisher Unwin, 5s.); "Japan" in *Historical Sketches* (S.P.G., 1d); Baring Gould's or Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, under date February 5th and December 3rd.

Answers to be sent to Bog-oak, Industrial School, Andover, by August 1st.

CLASS LIST FOR APRIL.

CLASS I.

M. P., 39; Honeysuckle, 37; Ierne, 35; Klondyke, 32.

CLASS II.

Maiden Aunt, 22; Veritas, 19 (three answers).

REMARKS.

Alas! the numbers fall off with Central Africa.

13. Livingstone's position towards missions was—*First as a Pioneer*. The moving spring with many unconscious pioneers of Christianity has been trade, adventure, sport. With him the moving spring was, 'I go to make an open door for commerce and Christianity.' *Secondly, as an Inspiration* to others (witness the Universities' Mission to Central Africa and the Free Kirk in Blantyre), stirring men up to heal 'the open sore of the world.'

14. The Bishops are well done. Bishop Steere is the favourite. Bog-oak thinks him, taken all round, the greatest of all that succession of heroes. *Maiden Aunt* omits Bishop W. M. Richardson, present Bishop of Zanzibar, and Chauncey Maples, late of Likoma, both consecrated June 29, 1895.

15. Reasons for removal of base of operations from Zambesi to Zanzibar should include—(1) That Zanzibar was the best centre, the 'Key of Central Africa.' (2) That Swahili (and not Nyasa) formed a common language for all the district. (3) More healthy. (4) More secure from war, which must hinder work. (5) Constant food supply.

16. Accounts of work at various stations good. A new Masasi has been formed by migration, a short way off; and Bishop Richardson is doing something even for old Masasi, which was re-occupied and lapsed into heathenism. *Honeysuckle*.—Unangu is an offshoot of Nyasa Missions, not of Magilæ.

July begins a new half-year, and a fresh prize. Let us hope for more members.

## 'MONTHLY PACKET' NOTICES.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The readers of the 'Monthly Packet' are invited to address CHELSEA CHINA on any subject the discussion of which occurs to them as likely to interest others, especially in connection with articles appearing in the Magazine.

## CHINA CUPBOARD PRIZES—

*Variety Specimens.* Prize, monthly, 5s.

*Search Questions (Who, When, and Where).* Prize, for six months taken together, £1 1s.

*Prose Competition.* Monthly Prize, 5s., or 10s., according to merit.

## RULES for the above—

(1) Papers must be sent by the 25th of each month, addressed to CHELSEA CHINA, care of Messrs. A. D. Innes & Co., Limited; they must NOT be addressed to 'the Editors.' (2) Each envelope must be marked *outside* with the subject to which it refers. Papers under separate competitions or discussions must be in separate envelopes. (3) The correspondent's name and address must be written on every paper: the use of a *nom de plume* for the lists is optional. (4) If competitors fail to comply with any rule, their papers will be disqualified. (5) The real name of the prize-winner is published in each case. (6) There are no entrance fees. (7) Prizes cannot be taken by the same person twice in a half-year.

## PROVERB COMPETITION, 1898.

It appears to us that a set subject fails to attract authors of experience, or to elicit their best work. We therefore cordially invite stories for next year's Christmas Number to be sent in without limit of subject, to be chosen according to merit and paid for in the usual manner. The PROVERB COMPETITION is limited to authors under 25.

All stories not to exceed 10,000 words, to be sent in between JUNE 1st and July 1st, 1898. Proverb stories to be headed PROVERB COMPETITION, CHRISTMAS NUMBER, outside the wrapper, other stories CHRISTMAS NUMBER only. Stamped cover or stamps to be enclosed for return.

Illustrate this quotation in a story—

'Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them.'

[The Editors of the 'Monthly Packet' will feel obliged if All Contributors will write their names and addresses clearly on their MSS., and will enclose stamps for return. Unless these conditions are complied with, the Editors cannot undertake to preserve, return, or enter into correspondence about MSS. Much trouble is saved if accompanying letters are enclosed in the parcel instead of being sent separately.]

The utmost care is taken in returning MSS., but the Editors can only hold themselves absolutely responsible for such as are sent to them at their own request.]

# THE MONTHLY PACKET.

## NEW SERIES.

---

AUGUST, 1898.

---

### *THE GOSPEL WRIT IN STEEL.*

BY ARTHUR PATERSON, AUTHOR OF 'FATHER AND SON,'  
'FOR FREEDOM'S SAKE,' ETC.

---

#### CHAPTER XXII.

A BULLET had grazed John's skull and cut a deep and ugly scalp wound, which now began to bleed freely. This, though it had given him consciousness, and enabled him to encourage his horse to put forth all its speed, brought a new danger with it—a weakness that rapidly increased. He fought against his faintness with all the stubbornness that was in him. He knew by the course his horse was taking that he was making straight for the lines ; he knew the power and courage of the animal, and felt that if this cursed faintness could be kept at bay, the precious letter could be safely delivered into Sherman's hands.

Whiz ! A bullet tore over his shoulder, cutting through the cloth of his tunic. The enemy were within range, and had seen him. John stroked his horse's neck and whispered to it. He had not strength for whip or spur or the heart to use them, and they were not needed, for the good beast, frightened by the noise of the bullet, made a plunge that nearly unseated his rider, and then broke into a furious gallop. The next shot fell wide, and then the firing ceased. But giddiness again began to overpower John in spite of all his efforts, and he could neither see nor feel—only by some blind instinct cling to his flying horse. He wondered vaguely whether this meant death. 'But it shall not,' he muttered, 'till I have brought that letter

in.' For two miles he rode on, the Texans following in grim silence, drawing nearer and nearer as John grew weaker. The end was very near. John's head dropped lower and lower, the reins slipped from his hand ; he clung to the horse's mane and swayed to and fro like a drunken man, and the grip of his knees began slowly to relax. Suddenly his horse pulled up, throwing both feet out stiffly and coming to an instant halt, with arched neck and quivering ears. A man stood in the path with presented rifle ; behind him, a score more, mounted, a cavalry patrol.

'Who goes there ?'

The answer was the dull thud of a falling body, a yell of disappointment from the Texans—and John lay as one dead at Sergeant Hornber's feet.

\* \* \* \* \*

'What is it, then ?'

General Sherman spoke in an impatient tone, being engaged in calculations which had been interrupted five times in as many minutes.

'Courier returned, General. Lieutenant Snelling sent me to report.'

'Which courier ?'

'John Burletson.'

Sherman put down his pen.

'Why does not the man come himself ?'

'He is dead, General.'

Sherman leisurely folded up his papers.

'Where is the body ?'

'Lieutenant Snelling's tent.'

'I will go to him.'

A crowd of men, mostly couriers, were collected about the tent, discussing in cool and cheerful tones the size and shape of the wound in John's head.

'Wonderful how he could have lived so long,' Sherman heard one man say. 'He must have wanted to get here powerful bad. Pity the news he came with was not written down. He's a gone coon—sure.'

Then they drew back to let the General pass. Within the tent were the Lieutenant, Sergeant Hornber, and the Surgeon to the staff, who was feeling John's pulse.

'Strange case,' said the doctor, looking up at Sherman. 'The man's alive. His brain is nearly exposed, and he has lost

pints. He must have ridden for miles to get himself into such a state ; we found blood in his boots.'

'Has he spoken ?'

'No, General. But I will bring him to consciousness if there is enough vitality left for my stuff to act. I guess you had better remain here if you are expecting news of importance. He may last a minute or two after he revives ; he won't go much further. Ah ! look out ! He's coming round now ; stand where he can see you.'

John's eyelids quivered ; he sighed twice and then looked feebly round. As he caught sight of Sherman's face his expression became concentrated and full of intelligence, and his lips moved. Sherman bent his head until their faces almost touched.

'Speak up,' he said gently, but in a matter-of-fact tone. 'Remember I am a little deaf.'

But John did not try to speak. Looking at Sherman with eyes full of meaning he lifted his arm feebly, and placed his nerveless fingers on his left side.

'The pocket,' cried the doctor—'something in his pocket.'

They undid the coat, and Sherman drew out General Johnston's letter. At sight of the handwriting he tore it open and read swiftly. John watched him eagerly. He saw the stern eyes brighten, and the broad chest heave with a great sigh of relief. Then he lost consciousness once more, and even the doctor thought this time that he was dead.

'Greely,' Sherman said to the doctor, who was looking at the letter with curious eyes, 'this man deserves the thanks of the army. If he lives he shall know it. Nothing must stand in the way of his recovery. I know you will spare no pains—you never do ; but drop all other work if necessary, and stay by him. I would rather lose a company than such a life as his.'

Sherman spoke huskily, and with deep feeling. He had good reason. The letter now in his possession was a notification from Johnston to Hardee that the fortified positions on the railway from Kingston to Marietta had been secretly abandoned. With such intelligence to hand, all anxiety in Sherman's mind concerning his own position was over. This letter meant that a general retreat southwards on the part of the Confederates was in progress, and his own bold march to Dallas justified. In a few days the army would be within

reach of all its supplies, and have advanced far into the enemy's country. These hopes were realised. In six days the railway as far as Big Shanty—north of Marietta—was in Union hands; New Hope crossing was carried, and by the first of June Sherman was able to report to Washington that he was in a strong position, and in full command of supplies, having marched one hundred miles into Georgia through a densely-wooded country, in the worst weather, against a vigilant and stubborn foe.

John lay between life and death for a week. His condition was a subject of interest to numbers of men who had never seen his face. Bob Spenniker, who had reached camp an hour after his leader, with a wounded leg, gave every one he knew a highly-coloured account of the whole expedition, and the news spread from regiment to regiment that this courier, and a recruit at that, had interviewed General Johnston and brought to Sherman despatches of enormous importance. As confirmation of this the report came that 'Uncle Billy' sent every day to inquire after the wounded man. The chief speculation of interest soon became what reward the courier would receive if he lived. It would be promotion of some kind; that much was certain; equally certain was it, Sherman being Commander, that if the man did his duty his future was assured. But would he live? Nobody who was able to obtain reliable information thought so; for it was given out on the best authority that Surgeon Comfort Greely had guaranteed that he would not die.

Dr. Greely, or 'Candy Greely' as he was called, in compliment to the extreme acerbity of his tongue and temper, was a very positive individual. Such a man either becomes a prophet to his generation or the reverse. Greely, to put it mildly, was not a prophet. This did not mean that his patients usually died. Very many recovered, for he knew his business well. But, as he expressed it, they were the wrong ones—the people he said would die. While others, about whom he had waxed vehemently hopeful, immediately saw fit to contract some unexpected complication, and become defunct, as if to spite him. Yet he never learnt discretion, but continued to prophesy as positively as ever to a derisive world. John's case interested him. He was not easily touched, but the determination that this man must have shown impressed Greely as much as it had done Sherman. He nursed and



tended John with more than his usual skill, and with the tenderness of a woman. Never in any campaign was a harder fight made against death. It was an interesting sight to see the General and his surgeon, both grim elderly men, inured to bloodshed, daily braving death themselves, and holding human life at its cheapest rate as all soldiers must at such a time, anxiously watching by the bedside of a private soldier, a unit in the hundred thousand one of them commanded, and a stranger to them both.

'He *must* be pulled through,' Sherman said once impatiently, when John looked worse than usual. 'I can't afford to lose this kind of man. Will you do it, Greely?'

'I said so,' was the sharp reply. 'Don't I know my trade? I tell you he *shall* live.'

Sherman sighed.

'Chances are dead against him. I can see that.'

'D—— the chances. But I don't admit it.'

'What is in his favour?'

'Youth, health, constitution of a bull; temperament of an Abraham Lincoln. Chances, General! Pshaw! I know he has a wound that would kill two men. I say I know that. I know he did the worse thing he could for your sake, and rode miles bleeding like a hog, and that all this last week I have had fever to reduce, with hardly an ounce of blood in him to spare. But what of it? He is alive. Weak—yes; that's the point; but his temperature normal, and his pulse not so bad. Wait, now; watch, wait—and see.'

Twenty-four hours passed, and not only did Sherman, Hornber, and Spenniker, the men personally interested in John, watch anxiously to see what changes time would bring, but half the men in Spenniker's regiment watched too, having bets with Bob on the result. At the end of the eighth day the change came—and for the better. The deadly prostration after the fever and loss of blood showed signs of giving way. The next day John took liquid nourishment freely, and the corner was turned. Great was the joy and congratulations of John's friends, and great the indignation among Bob Spenniker's comrades. That astute gentleman the moment the patient showed signs of recovery had taken up every bet made against his life, and now stood to win a fabulous amount, unless his debtors were knocked over themselves before they had a chance of paying up, a fate which, Bob afterwards complained, over-

took most of them. Two weeks later John was sitting up in bed, propped by pillows, reading a letter from home, when General Sherman, who had been too busy to see him lately, came in unexpectedly.

'Tiring your brain, aren't you?' he said kindly, bringing with him an atmosphere of power and life which John found very invigorating. 'What does doctor say? Drop that, now!' as John saluted. 'Let ceremony alone until you are on your feet again. What are those? Home letters?'

'Yes, General.'

'Then I must take back what I said. They will do you good. That from your wife?'

John flushed, for he was very weak. It was a letter from Jean. Sherman saw he had made a mistake.

'Whoever it is send her a bright answer back. You will be fit for service before a month is gone—and promotion.'

John caught his breath.

'General, what does that mean? I have done nothing deserving such a thing.'

'We think differently,' was the answer. 'I do, anyhow. It is in my power to give a man a commission if he is clearly worth it.'

'A commission—for me—from you?' John gasped. He was still very weak. 'I can't believe it.'

His voice was strained, and trembled in his excitement. Dr. Greely, who had just entered, shook his head at Sherman.

'Don't, then,' the General said good-humouredly. 'I only talked to cheer you. It appears I made a mistake,' looking at Greely. 'Never mind. Good news never turned up a man's toes yet.'

'Nervous excitement has, often,' snapped the doctor.

'Then I will go. Take care of yourself, Buletson, and get well.' He rose abruptly, and was leaving the tent, when Greely, who was watching John's face, stopped him.

'One minute, General,' he whispered. 'He has something on his mind to say to you.'

Sherman paused good-naturedly, and waited, while John took up the letter he had been reading, and played with it nervously.

'Say it out, man,' the General said, with a smile. 'What is there to tell me?'

'I've a favour to ask, General.'

'Well?'

'You have hinted at rewarding my small services.'

'We don't reward small services in this army. Well?'

'I joined, General, as a kind of volunteer.'

'So did I.'

'A letter came with me from the President. I think he told you my object.'

'You mean that crazy notion, that preposterous idea, of going to Santanelle?'

'Yes, General.'

'But when you volunteered for this expedition I thought all that had been knocked out of you.'

John smiled faintly, and caressed his letter.

'It has been knocked in to-day. I want to know, General—'

'What?' The question came like a pistol shot, sharp and threatening.

'Whether I may go there, right away, when I am on my feet.'

'I should not offer promotion to a suicide.'

'I meant instead of that.' John's voice was low, but very firm. The General looked at him with a frown, then turned on his heel, saying in a biting tone—

'It is well I know your mind, for it will save me trouble. A man who can deliberately fool away his life is not fit to command others. But I will wait until you are stronger, and have your nerve and senses back again.'

### CHAPTER XXIII.

DR. GREELY was a short-tempered man. The infirmity was constitutional, aggravated by a disappointed life, and when we make his acquaintance it had become chronic and ineradicable. Yet he had another side to his nature, and was so kind to his favourite patients that though he made numberless enemies he was never without a friend. John had found this. His own quiet disposition had drawn out all that was best in Greely, and until the General's visit there had not been a difference between them. The immediate consequence of Sherman's call was an increase of gentleness on Greely's part towards John. The patient's nerves were so much overwrought by the interview that it was only by great care and skill that

Greely prevented fever from supervening; and very rude indeed were the remarks he made to the General's orderly who was sent to inquire.

'Tell General Sherman that my man has been on the tear ever since he was here. I have had no sleep with him last night, and don't expect to get much to-night. It is all his fault; and if the man dies, which is now more than likely, I shall hold him responsible. Take him this word for word. If it scares you I will write it down. He may know something about leading an army, but he knows less than nothing about talking to a man wounded in the head.'

When John was well enough, however, his turn arrived, and he became the astonished recipient of the choicest epithets in Dr. Greely's vocabulary. Greely had been an interested listener to the conversation which had done the mischief, and had heard from Hornber something of John's intentions when he joined the army. He liked John, and considered it to be his duty to tell him what his obstinacy would lead to if he persevered in his plan of going to Santanelle. The attack began as soon as the patient was really out of all danger of relapse, and lasted until his wound was healed, and his strength had returned to him. John said little in defence, and the doctor boasted in private to Hornber that he was convincing 'this misguided idiot that his mad coon-hunt must be given up.' Some of the arguments John had to confess cut him to the quick.

'I will take it another way,' Greely said one evening as they sat smoking, Hornber with them, aiding and abetting Candy Gree with might and main. 'You are hard upon your mother—shamefully so. To leave her for such a thing as this is the worst kind of selfishness. Bad enough to go away to fight your country's battles, though that is right and natural. If every man who had a mother stayed at home there would be no army at all. That stands to reason. But to desert her in her feeble old age, to fly off on such a cracked senseless wee-gee as this! I tell you, any man who could do it after he knows what you know now, is a criminal, and I am not the least too tender-mouthed to say so to his face. If the risk were reasonable, and the life to be saved your brother's, or some man who had gone through fire to save you, I would say little. But this man is not that kind, and the risk to you is out of all reason and sense. Do you think the Rebs don't guard their prisons? You have sixty miles to ride to Santanelle from this camp and sixty miles to

get back again ; and if you are found out and he is caught, what then ? Shooting—quick, cold-blooded shot-gun work. I know, for I have had scores under me that have been in Southern prisons. They love there to knock a Yank on the head—it means one less to find food for. If the thing had ever been done I would try and forgive you ; but it has been tried and always failed. If you try now you are past swearing at. I am not at all sure that it ain't my duty to certify you as unfit to be at large, and see that you are arrested the day you leave me. What say you, Hornber ?'

'Me!' cried the sergeant, with a snort. 'There's more in my pipe than yours, Doc. Why do you harp on the risk ? As well tell a moth that fire burns. John loves danger. Listen to what Bobby Spenniker tells of how instead of saving his skin by a scoot, he bluffed up cool as an ice-house to General Josh Johnston and staff, and took the whole outfit in with his innocent face. I would not waste two breaths on the question of risk talking to John. Not but what you speak God's own truth. What I say is, Can any man with a head—and we all give him credit for having that—deliberately tread under his feet what Sherman has for him ? Talk about flying in the face of Providence ! Never had any man since the war began so good a chance of sailing in and capturing all that is good in the army. While, if he lets the chance go by, and goes and does what Sherman disapproves of, he'll miss it all and ruin himself. You talk of his mother. I'll add this. From what he has told me about the old lady, she just lives in the hope of his success. Aye, John, twist it and turn it how you may, if you fail here you rob your mother of her rights. She has helped, as mothers do, to make you what you are. To forego what is offered you will be rankest unfilialness to my thinking. If the love of your mother really holds your heart you'll never do it. There, I have said my say.'

Both looked at John and waited for his answer. This was his last day in hospital ; to-morrow he would be a free agent. Earlier in the day he had said he was going to the General next morning, so they had fired their last guns, for they knew, what John did not, that after his great service he would be refused nothing that he might reasonably ask.

'What will it be ?' the doctor asked.

John puffed a long ring of smoke from a cigar an officer in the cavalry had sent him, and looked at it thoughtfully.

'I have listened carefully, good friends, to all you say, and but for the mail that has come to me from home I do not know, torn about as my own mind has been since I have been here, that I could have stood against you and the General. There is truth, bitter and strong, in much you have set down. But as things are I cannot, I will not, go back upon my word. The chance of success is small, I know. I never thought it was big. But there is no other way, and if that boy is not pulled out of that hole he will certainly die. So much I heard a few days back. No; I must go, and without delay. I shall ask you, Sergeant, to trace out with me a map of roads, as far as we can get them on the way to Santanelle.'

'What next?' grumbled Hornber. 'Perhaps you will ask me to go too. I will not help you.'

'Yes, you will,' John answered gently, 'when you see that I mean going. You are the only one who knows enough to do it.'

'Good Lord! the man's mad,' Dr. Greely exclaimed. 'Ah! we are going to have a visitor. George!' as Hornber sprang suddenly to attention. 'It is the General himself!'

'Well, Doctor,' Sherman said, taking the camp-table as a seat and lighting a pipe, 'have you brought the fellow to reason as you promised me?'

'That seems impossible. I have done my best.'

'Obstinate still. What is to be done with him?'

'He should be arrested as a mischievous lunatic,' Greely answered savagely. 'Tied up and sent home in a cage. He has less sense than any man I ever met, and that is saying something.'

'What say you, Buletson?'

'I would ask your permission, General, to make a start for Santanelle in two days.'

The doctor exploded.

'If you do I'm d——d! That's all.'

'In three, then.'

'It will be a week, seven whole days and nights, and that is a month too soon, before you'll be allowed to go anywhere except for exercise.'

'Well then, a week,' John said, with a sigh, 'if I must wait so long.'

'You are a fool, Buletson, you know, and worse,' Sherman remarked severely.

'So I have been told by both these friends, General.'

'Don't call me a friend,' growled Greely. 'I have no use for men like you.'

Sherman looked amused.

'What plans have you?'

'Have I your leave to go?'

'I cannot prevent you. The instructions I received from the President are too clear to be set aside. If they were not it might be different.'

'I have strong reasons, General.'

'They must be strong. Well—you are going. Tell me your plans, I say.'

'I shall disguise myself. I have thought it out, and believe my best chance is to borrow the uniform of a Rebel subaltern. I know where I can get one.'

'You are ambitious.'

'It is risky, but, I reckon, worth it. The man who is going with me, if he can get his colonel's permission, will act as my servant.'

'Only one man?'

'I should have gone alone, but he wished so much to go.'

'Who?'

'Bob Spenniker.'

'The little rat. None better. Well?'

'We will ride to Santanelle town and gather information there about the prison. I shall pay a friendly call on the commandant, and perhaps get a look at the prisoners. What we do after that will depend upon circumstances.'

'When do you expect to get back?'

'In two weeks. It is sixty miles by road to Santanelle. We shall do that in three days. The return journey may take longer, and there are sure to be delays and many difficulties at the place.'

'I give you less time than that if you get away at all. Remember the chances of their seeing through your disguise if you go as an officer are ten times as great as they were before. We will talk about this later. I have a map that may be of use. We will do what we can for you. The cavalry shall be on the look-out and meet you if necessary. Come and see me in your rig. I have lived down South some years, and I may be able to give you some hints in deportment and behaviour. Everything will depend on that. I like your ideas on the

whole, but you will be like a man standing on a powder magazine with a lighted match in his hand.'

Two days later when John appeared before the General fully equipped, Sherman laughed heartily.

'I should not have known you,' he said. 'But there is room for improvement. You must not hold your sword that way to begin with. They would see there was something wrong at once. Now let me hear you speak. Ah! that will not do at all.' And he then proceeded to give John a lesson in accent, deportment, and manner, which he repeated until all that he had to teach was well and thoroughly learnt.

It was a characteristic action—one of those which endeared Sherman to his men, strong disciplinarian though he was.

John started on his quest at the end of June. He rode the horse whose speed and sagacity had already saved his life once, and Bob was equally well mounted. The men cheered John as he rode off. He could have had forty volunteers to accompany him, if he had needed them, for this new and original way of 'dishing the Rebs' made a great impression on the bolder spirits. But Bob was worth them all. He had been bred in the slums of Chicago, and had completed his education in the mining camps and ranches of the Rocky Mountains and Texas. There were few things of the wild and lawless kinds that 'the rat' had not taken part in; he was the best shot and the best rider of his regiment, and alas, the heaviest gambler. Why he had taken so strong a fancy to John no one could understand. It was a curious case of attraction of opposites. In John's presence Bob's language was comparatively decent; and though publicly he affected to look upon his leader as an amiable lunatic, it was not worth any one's while to make disparaging remarks about John in Bob's hearing. John, on his side, trusted Bob implicitly, and made no secret of the opinion that if he were successful it would probably be more owing to Bob than to any action of his own, Bob's keenness and quickness having inspired John with a profound respect for the little man.

They rode steadily all day, keeping a sharp look-out for troops but meeting none, except a patrol or two, which, thanks to Bob's sight and hearing, they easily avoided. At night they halted in a small village and John for the first time tried the effect of his disguise. He was well satisfied with the result, and they found no difficulty in getting all they needed. Now and then they lost their way, but Bob's woodcraft and ingenuity



proved equal to all emergencies and they reached Santanelle by the evening of the third day. Before the war Santanelle had contained one thousand inhabitants ; now there were but a hundred males, and not one who was young and able-bodied. Most of the work was done by the women, and the place had a depressed, poverty-stricken appearance. There was only one hotel, in which place they took up their quarters, intending to begin the campaign the next day. Bob, however, began that night by making friends with the landlord, and playing euchre with him until the small hours of the morning. In this way he not only increased his stock of ready money, for the Southerner was no match at cards for the Western man, but gained much valuable information about the prison and its commandant.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

BOB SPENNIKER was an excellent listener, and possessed the art of turning a confiding person inside out without that person suspecting his design, but he was not good at reporting what he heard.

'You will have to bluff it, boss—same as you did Josh Johnston, only harder,' was his reply to John's question concerning the prison. 'The prisoners is shot like skunks if they put half an inch of nose outside the rail fence—so you see how it is.'

And this was all Bob would say for a time. By dint of many questions, however, John at last learnt that Santanelle was an offshoot of the great prison of Andersonville, and contained about three hundred prisoners, guarded by thirty men, under command of a Lieutenant Catford. The post of prison guard was much hated by the Confederate soldiers ; desertion was common, and even Lieutenant Catford, the landlord said, was sick of his billet and pining to be at the front. This, the most important part of the evidence, Bob only mentioned as an afterthought. What had impressed him was the landlord's emphatic assertion that no one was allowed to go over the prison because infectious diseases were too prevalent there. Bob was rough, hard in the grain, and hardly reared ; but certain disclosures of the landlord had changed his attitude toward the enterprise in a remarkable manner. Up to this

time the little man had been openly scornful that John should spend money and effort in an attempt to rescue one man. Now, though he said little, that little was significant.

'I see no road clear myself. But don't doubt it will come clear to you. Good luck to the bis. I don't know that I take more pleasure shooting Rebs in a general way than any other whites, but after what I've heard would like to set some of these brutes wriggling over a redskin's fire—I would, by the Lord!'

John sent Bob to the stable to procure for himself the opportunity of quietly thinking out his plan of campaign. Bob retired nothing loth, groomed the horses and gossiped with the bar-keeper until the order came to saddle up. John took the opportunity, remembering something Sherman had told him, to walk into the stable and reprove Bob in vigorous language for some fancied neglect of the horse. He nearly spoilt it all, however, at the end, by laughing at the intense astonishment of the little man.

'Your lieutenant can talk, then,' the bar-keeper said, after John had stalked out, his sabre clanking royally over the loose stones. 'I thought by his looks he were an extra-ordinary mild kind of man.'

'You make no mistake,' Bob said viciously. 'The most cussed nigger-driver ever I struck. His father's overseer down in Louisanny don't begin to come near him. I've seen him take a nigger's hide off in strips when he was really riled.'

'Don't say?' exclaimed the other. 'Then Lieutenant Catford and he will freeze at once.'

'That man fond of thrashing niggers?' observed Bob, meditatively.

'You'd say so if you saw him with the Yanks. They run at the sound of his voice, I'm told. When he first came they complained of their grub—as if they'd be fed high, blame 'em, when our own boys have not enough! But he stopped that.'

'How?'

Bob ducked his head behind one of the horses to hide his face. He did not think its expression was to be trusted.

'Told 'em that if there was not enough food he had plenty of ammunition, and if they spoke again he'd feed 'em with that. This settled it. Since then the cholera thinned 'em down to rights. Good job too.'

Bob repeated this conversation to John, who made no reply except to quicken his pace. They were riding toward the prison.

'Going to interview the lieutenant?' Bob remarked casually, a little offended that John said nothing about his plans.

'Yes. Remember you are a Texan.'

'That so? An' you?'

'I am a subaltern in Hood's division, invalided from active service,' John pointed to his forehead, carefully enveloped in one of the old bandages which had been preserved for the purpose. 'I am calling as I pass—that is all at present. We will have to see what this man Catford is like before we make more plans.'

The prison was on the side of a hill at the foot of which lay the town of Santanelle. It was a large enclosure or stockade; above it, on the ridge of the hill, stood the guard-house. Four sentries were pacing along the four sides of the stockade, and at each angle was a twelve-pounder gun. John saw at a glance that the place was so constructed as to be easily controlled by a mere handful of armed men.

A sentry on duty at the guard-house directed John to a house a hundred yards away as the lieutenant's residence. Here another soldier, who was sitting at his ease on a stump of wood cutting up a plug of tobacco, carelessly saluted, and after filling his pipe leisurely proceeded to lead the way in. This lack of discipline was not lost on John, who also noticed that the man was raggedly dressed and shivering with ague. He led the way through a narrow passage, and, without knocking, thrust his head into a room beyond. A few words passed in whispers in the room and then the soldier, flattening himself against the wall to leave John room to pass, said with a nod of encouragement—

'He's in. Move along, Lieutenant.'

John moved on with his best Southern swagger, leaving Bob outside to converse with the guard, and found himself in a small room so full of tobacco smoke that the man within it was half hidden as by a fog. Through the smoke were to be seen a pair of long legs covering the seats of three chairs, and, on a fourth, the body of a sallow-faced young man, who looked as if he was in an advanced stage of consumption. His uniform jacket was minus several important buttons; his boots were unpolished; his trousers unstrapped; his shirt was

ragged at the edges, while his face and hands were grimy to a degree. On a table at his right was a bottle of spirits, a tumbler half full of whisky and water, and a pile of yellow-backed novels, one of which he was reading. At John's entrance the lieutenant withdrew his legs from their supporting chairs and extended a cold, limp hand.

'I am happy to make your acquaintance, Lieutenant Burltson.'

His voice was as languid as his manner, but his eyes, which seemed to contain in their expression all the vitality the rest of him lacked, said plainly, 'And what the deuce do you want with me?'

John bowed, shook hands in silence, considering how he should deal with this man. Bob's first words this morning, 'Bluff it, boss,' occurred to him. He felt that no half measures would be of the least avail with such a man.

'My visit surprises you, Lieutenant,' he said, drawing his words slowly with as near an approach to a Southern accent as it was in his power to give. 'That is because you do not know my business here. But you will before long. I am to take your place.'

John forgot himself a little here, and jerked out the last sentence with true Yankee abruptness; but Catford did not notice it. The significance of the words to him prevented all danger of this. Never did a random blow go home with greater force. In an instant the languor of the man had given way to intense excitement.

'It has come at last, then? Take some whisky. Have something to eat. This is news indeed. Are you from Richmond?'

'Thanks, I have breakfasted,' John answered, the steadiness of his voice in strong contrast to the other's vehemence, though both men were equally excited. 'I am from the front, from Hardee's corps. I was scalped by a bullet wound, and they refuse to let me do any more active service for a while, and sent me here. You will get authority from Richmond, which will come later on. Hardee was writing there when I left. You will take my place in the regiment.'

'Which?'

'Thirteenth—Hood's Texans.'

Catford, who was helping himself to some more whisky, looked up with a puzzled air, and John felt very cold.

'But I thought those devils would only fight under a Western man?'

'Wa-al,' John said smiling, 'that is about what they're used to. I am Western bred, as you see; but necessity compels many things. Any man who'll fight will do now.'

Lieutenant Catford's face fell a little.

'Infernal queer men to lead, those.'

'More fun to be had with them, though,' John said drily, 'than guarding prisoned Yanks. But no doubt that will depend upon the temperament of the officer. It's more dangerous.'

Lieutenant Catford flushed angrily; the whisky had warmed his blood.

'If you suppose I'm scared,' he cried, 'you don't know who you are speaking to. I am there if it comes to leading. They shall find out, too, what discipline means, and that I know how it should be maintained.'

'Be careful,' John drawled, 'Texans ain't niggers, you know.'

Catford put down his glass with a muttered oath. But John's face was so innocent and withal so firm, that he thought better of what he was going to say and offered cigars instead. John took one, picking it carefully, though in truth he knew nothing about cigars.

'This life here,' he said, 'you find quiet. Don't you?'

'It is the dullest there is, after you have been here as long as I have. A man who likes his own company may get along. I do not.'

John nodded, and then leant back in his chair and puffed in silence, watching Catford under his eyelids.

'I want quiet—or they believe I do—the Government, I mean—and they think you have had enough.'

'They are right there,' Catford responded with an uneasy laugh. 'I would have thanked them to find that out before. Do you know the President?'

He lit a cigar as he spoke, and John noticed that his hand trembled so much that he could hardly hold his match.

'That is a hard question for me to answer,' he replied. 'Perhaps I won't answer it if you don't mind.'

'Not the least. How were things going when you left the front?'

Catford spoke with a visible effort, and for a short time

they chatted about the chances of the war. Then John played his second card.

‘I will ask a favour of you, Lieutenant.’

‘Anything I can do.’ The tone was cordial even to nervousness.

‘I want to take measure of what the command of this prison amounts to. If you have time this morning will you show me the guard-house, the place where you keep your prisoners, and your means of defence in case of attack or revolt? I do not know, of course, how they may settle things at Richmond, but if they approve my appointment here they will want you at once, and I should like to be prepared.’

Lieutenant Catford played with his cigar and frowned. Who was this man?

‘I fear that is out of my power. Regulations forbid it, unless you can show me written authority from the President.’

This was a facer for John. Yet his need was desperate.

‘Excuse me, I question that. Show me the order.’

The lieutenant did not answer, and John followed up his advantage.

‘As commander here you have a right to exercise your discretion. I am aware of that. But I have mentioned the name of my general; and I could give you others.’ He paused, but still there was no reply; Catford was biting his finger-nails in hesitation. John put down his cigar, and took up his sword.

‘I will wish you good-day, Lieutenant.’ His manner was frigidly dignified, his voice as severe as he could make it.

Catford did not meet his eye.

‘Sit down again; we will talk it over,’ he said.

John turned on his heel. ‘I see nothing to talk about, sir. You have made a mistake, but that is your business. Good morning.’

Catford gathered himself together with a dejected air.

‘I will do what you ask. After all you may as well see what a God-forsaken hole this is, and the dogs that live and die in it. My chief reason for putting you off, if you wish to know it, was a fear lest the place should sicken you and my chance of escape be lost.’

‘No danger of that, my orders are too strict. When shall I come?’

‘This afternoon at three. You’ll lunch here?’

But John declined, though with politeness. He wanted

fresh air, and leisure to think and plan. He had indeed 'bluffed it,' and his ideas required altogether re-arranging. Before this talk his inspection of the prison would have been by the favour of the commandant. Now he saw that he must assume command. Catford feared him for some reason; this must be made the most of. Yet how to work it into practical results?

John found the lieutenant waiting for him when he arrived at the appointed time. Catford looked smarter and more soldierly, having dressed himself with some care. But the same uneasy shiftiness was in his eyes. His men looked discontented, to the point of mutiny. Their guard-house was a poor place, the bedding dirty, the supply of food, John found, scanty and irregular. If this was the condition of the gaolers, he thought, what must that of the prisoners be? The system of defence was explained by Catford in detail, and from the complacency of his tone it was evident that he felt himself upon safe ground.

'We have been extra careful lately. There are rumours that Sherman may make a dash for us on the way to Andersonville. If he does, the Yanks here will wish he'd stayed away. I will show you why presently. As it is we have had to make several examples, some of the fools thinking we were afraid of their slop-pail army. But that is easy. The trouble is keeping the brutes alive. I tried to do something for them when I first took command, but it was no good. Now I am as hard as nails, and would as lief blow them all up to-morrow. As it is they die off like rotten sheep. Come and see them.'

The stockade was twelve feet high, an impassable wall of timber; within it was a railing spiked at the top, and within the railing, which enclosed an acre of ground, were the prisoners. The reports Bob had brought, and the hints Catford dropped, made John brace himself to see anything with calmness, however loathsome or heart-breaking it might be. But when the actual reality was before him it required all his self-control to prevent an exclamation, then and there, of grief and rage. It was fortunate that both Catford and his men were too much accustomed to what they saw to watch closely any effect it might have upon a visitor.

Catford wishing to get the inspection over as soon as possible, walked quickly through the throng of prisoners, who shrank

back to let him pass, and stared vacantly at the man at his heels in Confederate uniform.

Three hundred men, houseless and shelterless, huddled together like cattle in stockyards on the bare patch of ground. That was what John saw. They were without bedding and destitute of decent clothing. All day long the fierce sun poured down on their unfortunate heads, or they were drenched by storms of rain. Their food was a little bacon and corn meal, often mouldy and unfit to eat. Their only drink water from a stream which trickled through the enclosure, and was thereby rendered for the most part noisome and bad. Washing was out of the question. The place reeked with abominable odours; nearly every face was discoloured by disease or poisoned blood. Through this living mass of suffering John was hurried by Catford and his men, and so stunned was he by what he saw that they had brought him back to the gates before he remembered that whatever happened he must find out if Seth were still alive.

'Wait for me,' he said, stopping short; 'I need no guard and will be back again in a few minutes. Leave me alone, I must see these things for myself.'

Then he strode away, leaving the lieutenant and his men looking at one another in amazement. The sergeant of the guard would have followed, but Catford called him back.

'No,' he said nervously. 'Let him go where he pleases—let him go.'

So John went alone. Had the whole guard been at his side, however, they would not have stopped him now. He was in a white heat of fury at what he had seen, and for the time was careless whether he betrayed himself. To and fro he wandered among the crowd, searching among the filth and misery and blank despair for the face he knew. Nowhere, however, could he find Seth, and at last came to the conclusion that the lad was dead. He stood still and looked round once more slowly. Had his quest come to nothing after all? Must he go home to Jean and tell her—this? He was at the end of the enclosure furthest from the gates. No—Seth was not here. He turned to go when some one plucked at him from behind, and a lad who looked barely fifteen said—

'A man would speak to ye. Says he knows ye—will you come?'

John in his relief could not answer, but signed to the



boy to show him the way, and then saw Seth, white and very thin, lying against the railing.

John threw himself on his knees while the crowd around him stared and whispered.

'You know me, Seth?'

'I thought it must be you,' he answered faintly. 'John, have you *turned*?'

'I have put this on to come and look for you. It was the only way I could get here.'

'You are too late, old friend.'

'Why so?'

'I cannot walk. It will be cholera very soon. The same as the rest. I'll never see Jean again.'

John bent down until his lips touched Seth's ear.

'Take heart and strength. You'll be free in less than a week, and not only you but every one here. I came to save you alone, but now, so help me God, I will not leave this place until it is in ruins.'

He wrung Seth's hand, passed quickly through the crowd again, and rejoined Lieutenant Catford.

'I have seen all I want,' he said in a tone Jefferson Davies might have used. 'You may close the gates.'

## CHAPTER XXV.

LIEUTENANT CATFORD and his sergeant looked at John with curious eyes.

'Prisoners interest you?' the former said as they walked away together.

'If they did not,' was the rejoinder, 'I should not have come to relieve you. I got my wound through a bit of service which my commander rated at more than it deserved. I chose the billet here, because I wanted to take hold of a Yank prison. Show me the plan you mentioned for cheating Sherman if he tries to jump the place.'

Catford bit his nails again with indecision, but the confidence and authority of John's tone awed him.

A few yards from the stockade, in full sight of the guard-house, but some distance from it, was a small wooden hut. The Lieutenant went there and unlocked the door, which was

unusually heavy, and a peculiar sulphurous odour filled John's nostrils. The place was dark; the one window it possessed closed with a shutter. Catford lit a lamp of the kind used by coal miners and unbolted a trap-door which covered most of the space inside the hut.

'Come down,' he said, 'and see for yourself.'

They descended a ladder to the depth of several feet, and were in a long low passage filled with barrels.

'Gunpowder,' Catford said with a modest pride. 'At the first report of a Yankee advance on Santanelle the fuse will be lighted. The stockade is above us you see!'

'Do the prisoners know?'

'Certainly. I told them all about it to prevent surprise when the time came. It is my own invention, though they tell me there is one on a larger scale at Libby. General Winder at Andersonville has given instructions that when Sherman is within seven miles of that place, his men are to open fire upon the stockade with grape. I think my way is far neater. It has had a wonderful moral effect already. You should have seen the faces of the cusses when I mentioned it. Will it do?'

John had not made any remark since they entered the hut, and Catford found the silence oppressive.

'It is interesting. How did you dig it out?'

'Niggers,' Catford said with a grin. 'They did not relish the work much, but we found a way to persuade them. Let us get out of it now, the air is choking.'

He led the way up the ladder, which John behind his back examined carefully. It was an ordinary builder's ladder and could be pulled up or down by one pair of arms.

'Anything else you would like to see?'

'Guess not, thanks.'

'Then come and have a drink. This is terribly thirsty weather.'

John acquiesced absently. Half way to the Lieutenant's quarters he stopped short.

'Will you sup with me to-night?'

'No—come here. I cannot leave my post. Bad example to my men.'

John thought of the stories Bob had told him of Catford's night escapades.

'As you like,' he said, after reflection, 'But we must

share the thing. I will send my man to the hotel for the wine.'

Bob had to be found first. He was discovered playing cards with the men off duty. Already he was a favourite among them, and was telling stories now in the broadest Western dialect. He went upon the errand with great alacrity and returned loaded with sherry, whisky, and a bottle of champagne.

Under the influence of the wine Catford warmed to something like enthusiasm and confided to his new acquaintance much of his personal history, more peculiar than creditable.

The officers of the Confederate Army as a whole were gentlemen and men of honour. The tone set by their leaders, Generals Lee, Jackson, Johnston, and J. E. B. Stuart, was so good that their subordinates would have been of bad material indeed had they not been influenced by such noble examples of high breeding and purity of living. But there were exceptions, as must happen in every body of men, and the lower class of Confederate subaltern was neither a credit to his country nor a joy to his fellow-officers. John listened in silence. Catford and his history were supremely indifferent to him, but that the man should talk suited the purpose which the awful sights of this afternoon had planted in his heart. The prison must be destroyed; the men in it rescued from their living death. While Catford talked and drank, John sipped slowly at his wine and thought. The hours slipped by and still Catford talked—about himself, and John listened, making plans. The Lieutenant had a well-seasoned head, and it was long before the liquor overcame him. About midnight, however, he was growing very tipsy.

'Burleston, my boy,' he hiccupped solemnly, 'do you know the best thing I ever did in my life for my country? I have done many things, but the greatest of all is the mine—the mine beneath the prison.' He wagged a forefinger at John. 'I will tell you why. If Sherman knew what I knew this place would not be safe a day, nor half a day. Think of that!'

'If Sherman knew,' John said slowly; 'if he knew what?'

Catford chuckled.

'Why, that all the way from here to Kenesaw there is a clear road, only guarded by a single picket. Not a brigade, not a regiment, not a company within miles.'

'It is sixty miles to Kenesaw.'

'What's sixty miles to cavalry?'

'The Yanks would raise the country upon them and cut off thus their retreat.'

'Not if they rode by night. Oh, I have thought it all out. I figured it on my map and I dug that mine. Sherman may come if he dares, now. I'll send the whole three hundred Yanks to glory. I am bound to be too smart for 'em. What is a Yank to a Southerner for brains? We've the best blood in the world, sir! We're masters of this continent and will be always. I don't care how the war goes. Doubt my word? Do you doubt it?'

He was becoming quarrelsome now and banged his fist on the table.

'Show it me on a map,' John said, 'and I'll believe you.'

'There's one on that shelf. Bring it along, I can't, the wine has got into my legs. Not in my head, though, not my head. Get it—there's a good chap.'

John did so, and spread out a map of Georgia, a better one than he had ever seen before, upon the table.

'Where's Sherman now? Not far from Atlanta? Curse him! Where's the road? Here. Run your eye along it. I'm drunk, am I? Gad! I know more than you, my boy, though you think you're sober.'

John glanced at the map, rolled it up, and went back to his chair.

'You are right.'

'Of course I am,' Catford said with a chuckle. 'Have some more drink and I'll tell you another story, the best of all. A yellow girl this time. A rattler she was, by gum!—as the niggers say. Fill your glass, man, fill. You don't drink worth a cent.'

John did as he was told, and his wrist brushed against the map, which rolled on the floor at his feet. Catford began his story. But he was getting drowsy now and lost the thread of his narrative. He began again, laughing at himself, while John drank the wine he had poured out and rose from his chair.

'You are not going back to the hotel?'

'Starting now—good-night.'

Catford laughed uproariously.

'Be off then, and be hanged. Pity you have not a stronger head. If I could carry no more than you I'd shoot myself. See you to-morrow.'

He waved his hand, and John with one keen look at the man as he tried to fill a glass, which he was holding upside down, nodded to himself and left the room.

He gave a sigh of relief when he was outside, and drew a deep breath of the cool night air. Where was Bob? Card-playing, probably. But John did the little man injustice. He had not been a dozen steps toward the guard-house before he saw by the dim light a figure holding the horses.

'What is the luck, boss?'

'The best. Where have you been?'

'Oh, among them,' pointing with his thumb behind him. 'I had a high old time, but this is a rotten place and the men are worse.'

'They don't suspect you?'

'Me? Why, in the whole crowd you could not find such a Reb as me. Ask any of 'em. What have you determined on?'

They had mounted their horses and rode home.

'Are you up to a hard ride?' John said by way of answer.

'Am I not?'

'When does the moon rise?'

'In an hour.'

'I shall want you to ride to our lines with a note to Sherman and a map I will give you. Take my horse, as he is the strongest, and make all the speed you can. There is not time for me to give you all the details, but I intend to take this place, and if the General follows out my ideas I hope you will be back here in two days with men enough to cut the guard to pieces.'

Bob gave a grim laugh.

'I am in it.' Then a sudden thought struck him. 'How about you? I can't leave you weltering here.'

'You must. If I can fix things you may find me here in command when you return. Any way I shall be somewhere near that hut back of the stockade. They have laid a mine from it underneath the prison, and we must set a guard over the place before anything else is done. Remember that when you get back with the boys.'

Bob swore a heavy oath.

'See here, boss, you must change this thing round.'

'How?'

'You go—I stay. I will ride over to the Lieutenant in the

morning and say you had orders to join the regiment and will write him. Anything will do. I do not leave you at the cannon's mouth this way. S'pose they get wind? Why, they'd burn you in oil. You should have heard what I did 'bout what happened to a nigger who helped a prisoner to escape a while back. Your idea is rank foolishness. I came to stay by you, and I won't go.'

'You will,' said John in his quietest tone. 'I must remain, because the man I sought is here laying sick. Trust me, Bob, to see to my own skin.'

'That I will not.'

'Yes. But here we are at the hotel. Stay outside while I go in and write the letter. They must not see you leave. Can you find your way?'

'Can I ride a horse? We've been here but two days. What kind of a hairpin do you take me for?'

John found the hall of the hotel empty; he heard some late drinkers at the bar, but reached his room without attracting notice from any one, and wrote his letter.

'See that the boys reach here at night,' John said, handing Bob a parcel. 'Come in alone first. If you do not find me near the mine, you will know there is something wrong and can judge yourself what to do next. If the General will not risk it, come back, and we will work it by ourselves. I know you will not fail me.'

Bob gave a short hoarse laugh.

'If I do, I'm d—d! Adios.'

He touched his horse lightly with whip and spur and was out of sight in a moment.

John did not ride over to the prison until the afternoon of the next day. To his surprise he heard from the sentry that the Lieutenant was breakfasting. He found Catford trying to eat, looking very ghastly after his debauch, with a mass of official correspondence before him. There was a coldness and stiffness in his manner John did not like.

'I have heard from Richmond,' he said, playing with his cup, and looking stealthily at John.

'That so? What news?'

'Nothing like what you led me to believe.' He paused to munch a piece of bread and watch the effect of his words. John did not move or take his eyes from his face.

'Well, what do they say?'

'Why, that another man is coming to relieve me, not you at all. That is queer !'

Catford's eyes were peculiarly alive.

John's smiled sarcastically.

'I am not surprised. What is his name ?'

'Lieutenant Cunningham ; aide to Johnston. I know something about him. He was in trouble a short time since through the loss of important despatches. He don't come from Hardee at all. Did you ever meet him ?'

Catford asked this question as an afterthought. He saw John's mouth twitch.

'Cunnington ! The name is familiar. When does he come ?'

'To-day.'

'If it is the man I know,' John said, smiling again, 'he will be glad to see me here.'

*(To be continued.)*

*ST. AMBROSE THE GREAT.*

---

ST. AMBROSE, one of the four Latin fathers of the Christian Church, the patron saint of the city of Milan, which is preparing to celebrate with great pomp next year the sixth centenary of the great archbishop's death, is one of the most salient and impressive characters in history. A statesman, an orator, a stern and uncompromising defender of the faith, his noble figure stands out from among the wild and turbulent surroundings of paganism with a majesty and completeness that compels admiration and attention even from such as differ from him in belief. He was not only a Christian saint; he was a Roman hero, worthy of the strongest period of the Empire. Indeed, he was a Roman by birth as well as by soul, though his birthplace was outside the confines of Italy proper. It was in Treves, then called Augusta Trevirorum, that he first saw the light, a city situated in Gaul under Roman government. His father was its pretorian prefect, and Treves was the principal city of the prefecture. Of Ambrose, as of Plato and of many other men who became noted for their eloquence, it is related that when he lay in his cradle his future fame was indicated by a swarm of bees that buzzed around the cradle wherein he lay sleeping, and even settled on his lips without stinging him. The son of a wealthy man in a good social position, Ambrose received every advantage that the education of the day could bestow; he was even sent to Rome to finish his studies in the capital. Here he devoted himself to the law, and nothing was further from his thoughts than to enter the Church; indeed, he had not even been baptized. After he had obtained his diploma as an advocate he settled in Milan to follow there his legal profession, and was soon known as a popular and successful lawyer, his pleading being distinguished by singular eloquence. Indeed, his rare gifts attracted such attention that at quite an early age he

Digitized by Google



was appointed to the important post of consular prefect of the provinces of Emilia and Liguria, within which latter region lay the city of Milan. This great town was rising at this time into a position of rivalry with Rome, and was named, like so many other cities, 'the Athens of the West.' This was the epoch when the Christian Church, although still in the early stages of its development, was torn and rent by division, and especially by the great and powerful Arian schism. Arius, the bishop after whom the movement was named, denied what others contended was the central doctrine of the Christian system, the divinity of Christ, and as a necessary consequence the existence of the Trinity. The calm, philosophical Unitarianism of the present day, the lineal descendant of Arianism, furnishes no picture of the fierce passion with which religious controversy was carried on in the earlier ages of the Christian Church. 'In fact,' says Milman, 'religion was become the one dominant passion of the Christian world, and everything allied to it, or rather in this case which seemed to concern its very essence, could no longer be agitated with tranquillity or debated with indifference.' Auxentius, who was Archbishop of Milan under the prefecture of Ambrose, was an Arian. At his death it became the Church to elect his successor; the candidates were chosen from the two factions, headed respectively by Arius and Athanasius, and angry strife and confusion arose among the partisans of these opposed factions who had met in the church to choose Auxentius' successor. Ambrose, in his official capacity, was called upon to allay the tumult. He spoke to the assembled people in such a wise and eloquent strain that the turbulent crowd was awed and charmed into attention. Suddenly there broke from among their close ranks a cry, the voice of a little child, 'Let Ambrose be bishop! let Ambrose be bishop!' The cry was taken up by the crowd, fascinated with the eloquence of Ambrose, and was interpreted by them as the voice of God. The civil magistrate was called on to assume the ecclesiastical dignity. In vain he pleaded that he had not been baptized, that he was a layman, and had never studied Holy Writ; the crowd would not cease from its acclamations. Still Ambrose declined the position offered to him, and, like yet many another saint before and since, he fled from the place and hid himself. But it was in vain. The plebiscite of the people was confirmed by the exequatur of the Emperor, and Ambrose was forced to return, was baptized,

and within eight days of that ceremony installed in the episcopal office—a really unprecedented proceeding. He was but thirty-four years of age, in the full prime of his health and mental powers, at the time this unsolicited and undesired honour was thrust upon him. But once he had accepted the office he threw himself with all his might and energy into the fulfilment of his duties. One of his first acts was to give over the whole of his property to the Church for the relief of the poor. Unlike his predecessor, he became a follower of Athanasius, and hence an opponent of Arianism, of which to the end of his life he remained an uncompromising and consistent foe. In so doing he often found himself in conflict with high functionaries and persons not easy to contravene.

But Christianity had yet another foe to combat besides Arianism—her old and original enemy paganism. And this enemy Ambrose boldly resolved to attack. Gratian, the then reigning Emperor of the West, was a frivolous personage, much devoted to hunting, and unpopular in Italy on account of his foreign ways, especially his fondness for wearing the garb of the semi-savage Scythians and parading about clad in furs and carrying a longbow in his hand. All the emperors had been pontiffs, heads of the religious as well as the civil State, and their assumption of this dignity was marked by a grave and splendid ceremonial. The Czar of Russia has inherited this relic of the sway of the Roman Empire, and one of the most imposing features in the ritual of his late coronation was his ordination to this form of priesthood. Gratian was compelled by Ambrose to decline the pontificate of the pagan cult; the Archbishop did not think him worthy of this honour, and told him so plainly. His next act was directed at the deepest and dearest feelings of the Roman people. It was no image of a personal god like that of Jupiter Serapis in Egypt which was chosen by Ambrose as his first iconoclastic victim. It was the personification of Victory, the real deity of Rome, whose statue he caused to be removed from its pedestal and dragged ignominiously through the streets. When Symmachus and the heathen senators of Rome presented a petition that the altar of Victory should be rebuilt and offered a vindication on behalf of idolatrous worship, Ambrose directed attention to the true source of these victories, and called upon the heathens to declare what captains they had redeemed, what poor they had relieved, and to what exiles they had sent alms.

Remonstrances and counter petitions followed each in quick succession. The eloquence of Symmacchus was exercised in vain. The confiscation of the property of the heathen religious bodies followed this first step, wherefore the Vestal Virgins suffered in that remote age the fate that has often overtaken nuns in modern times. Eugenius, who had been raised for a brief period to the purple by the act of a powerful leader of armies, attempted to replace the deposed statue and to reinstate the pagan faith. But the death-knell of paganism had struck, and to Ambrose certainly belongs the merit of perceiving the moment at which to pronounce its final doom.

On the death of Gratian, murdered according to custom by the soldiery when his popularity, which at first had been great, had waned, his youthful brother, Valentinian II., stepped into his place under the regency of his mother. Ambrose was elected as her Prime Minister and political agent, even though she differed from his theological opinions, and on two occasions was sent by her as ambassador to Maximus, who had rebelled against the imperial authority. But though he held this high office Justina could not intimidate or coerce him, when, as an Arian herself, she demanded of Ambrose the use of one of the churches of Milan for the Arian form of worship. The request, even though coming from so high a quarter, was firmly refused. When the Empress tried to enforce his consent by sending soldiers into the church, Ambrose calmly said, 'You may use your swords and spears against me; such a death I will gladly undergo,' but he would not yield. This firm resolve caused a riot to break out, in which Ambrose with his own hands rescued an Arian from the fury of the populace. He did not wish that innocent blood should be shed. But he was immovable. He even thundered from his pulpit anathemas against the Empress, whom he compared to Eve, to Jezebel, to Herodias, to the wife of Job. More riots ensued; Ambrose was accused of tyranny. In reply he proudly pointed to his life's devotion to his Church and country, to his embassy to Maximus which had saved Italy. At last the Empress gave way, and Ambrose closed the controversy with the memorable phrase, 'The Empress is of the Church and in the Church, but not above the Church.'

Ambrose laid claim in his episcopal authority to control the public mind, and constantly preached and affirmed that the ecclesiastical authority was greater than the secular. He cer-

tainly maintained and increased the dignity and decorum of the Church by the mere style and rigid ceremonial he introduced. The Ambrosian ritual formulated by him is used to this day in Milan and its diocese, as also the canopy over the high altar seen in all Milanese and North Italian churches. He was also an ardent advocate of celibacy, not only in the Church, but outside it. Among his writings are several that concern the spiritual direction of virgins and widows. In one of these he recommends in a passing remark the invocation of angels, and is the earliest writer who makes any allusion to this practice. His zeal in the cause of celibacy is shown in his work 'On Virgins,' written two years after his consecration, and dedicated to his sister Marcellina. He was also the first to preach the virtue of saintly relics and to encourage the apotheosis of martyrs for the faith. At the time when Ambrose was in acute conflict with Justina he dreamed that it was enjoined on him to search the spot where the twin brothers Gervasius and Protasius had suffered martyrdom for the faith three hundred years before, and to rescue their bones from oblivion. Ambrose obeyed; search was made, and the investigations brought to light two skeletons of large size which had been beheaded, whose removal was attended by a miraculous flow of blood. These relics were presented to the veneration of the people, and miraculous virtues were found to reside in them. Their claims to reverence are still acknowledged in the Roman Church, and many churches have been built under the protection of these twin saints, including one that is especially beautiful at Venice. Thus in every way Ambrose understood how to enforce and enlarge his power and influence.

Meantime events rapidly followed each other in those troubled days. Maximus, who had usurped the government of Gaul, invaded Italy in alliance with the Germans, and Ambrose again undertook an embassy to induce him to desist from entering Milan. His attitude was so bold and uncompromising that Maximus drove him from his court; he permitted him to return to Milan in safety, and though he had proved unsuccessful in his quest he steadily refused to have aught to do with Maximus, who was stained with Gratian's blood. After the death of the young Valentinian Theodosius became sole ruler of the East and West. He was the first Emperor who had been baptized before his elevation to the purple and the last of the great rulers of the Roman

world. Theodosius was sprung from a Spanish family who, after the death of his father, had incurred disgrace and persecution at the hands of the reigning power. He himself had retired to a farm, whence, like Cincinnatus and Sforza, he was called to place himself at the head first of the army and then of the Empire. He was a Christian, but tolerant of the various creeds held by his subjects. Some monks at Callinicum, on the frontiers of Persia, were commanded by Theodosius to rebuild at their own expense a Jewish synagogue which had been burnt and destroyed in an outbreak of fanatical excitement. Ambrose exerted his personal and official influence against the execution of this order, which had incurred his dire displeasure, and the great fanatical Churchman carried the day against the more liberal and large-minded Emperor. The two were, however, to come into yet sharper conflict when the event occurred which has given Ambrose his eminent place in ecclesiastical history. A revolt had broken out in Illyria which had its centre in Thessalonica, the capital of the province, the city where Theodosius had fixed his headquarters after the terrible defeat of Adrianople. It was the city of his baptism, the city whence he had issued the edicts establishing Christianity in its Trinitarian form as the sole religion of the world. The cause of the uprising, which was to lead to tragic results, was of a petty nature. The Governor of the city had ordered the imprisonment of a favourite charioteer of the circus. The turbulent mob on the day of the public games clamoured against the detention of their favourite; the Governor sternly refused to grant their demand for his presence. Unfortunately the garrison, weakened by draughts for the walls and by desertion, proved unable to protect its chief; the Governor and several of his officers were murdered and their mangled bodies insulted and dragged through the streets. Theodosius, without waiting for a trial or investigating into the rights and wrongs of the matter, in a transport of rage despatched the most terrible orders. When too late he would fain have rescinded them, but it was no longer possible. The Roman city was given over to a horde of barbarians, the people were convened in the circus, attracted by the ever irresistible promise of games. But instead there ensued a cruel and indiscriminate massacre; more than fifteen thousand victims, without distinction of sex, age or position, were sacrificed to

the memory of the Governor, and the soldiers, when begged to desist, excused themselves by saying that they were compelled to render a certain tale of heads. Ambrose, on hearing of the massacre of Thessalonica, retired into the country, whence he wrote a letter to the Emperor, then residing at Milan, representing to him the enormity of his crime. Theodosius was greatly attached to Ambrose and had always submitted to the bishop's assertion of his sacerdotal position, which even went so far as to inhibit the entrance of the sovereign to the chancel of the cathedral and his relegation to a place at the head of the laity. 'Now,' says Milman, 'for the first time since the establishment of imperial despotism the voice of a subject was heard in deliberate public and authoritative condemnation of a deed of atrocious tyranny and sanguinary vengeance; for the first time the Emperor of Rome trembled before public opinion, and humbled itself to a contrite confession of guilt and cruelty.' The letter written by Ambrose stated in emphatic terms that he could not admit a man whose hands were stained with the blood of thousands to the Table of the Lord. Theodosius pleaded the forgiveness accorded to David. Ambrose replied, 'You have imitated David in his guilt, imitate him also in his repentance.' For eight months the Emperor remained excommunicated, and had no other resource but to submit to Ambrose's dictates. On Christmas Day he implored to be permitted to enter the church, which, as he humbly remarked, was open to the beggar and the slave; Ambrose replied that if he chose the Emperor might kill him and pass over his body into the sacred precincts. At length Ambrose gave way, and on two conditions—one, an edict establishing that a period of thirty days should elapse between a sentence of capital punishment and its execution; the other that the Emperor should do public penance—was he once more admitted to the privileges of a member of the Church. The Emperor humiliated himself even to accepting the latter demand, and after publicly assuming the humble language and attitude of a suppliant the interdict of Ambrose was removed. The attitude of the bishop in this matter has been much criticised by historians, many of whom assert that Theodosius' submission betrays weakness, that other sovereigns placed in this dilemma would have punished the arrogant prelate and asserted their right to enter the church. The protest of Ambrose was made, how-

ever, not in the interests of his own authority, but of humanity and mercy. It was the criminal and not the layman who was debarred from partaking with believers. The decision and impartiality of the bishop in bringing even the Emperor himself to the bar of justice in those lawless times was a triumph of the cause of humanity over despotism and reckless bloodshed, and as such cannot be enough admired.

It is strange that this important historical event should not have been oftener represented in art. Rubens has painted it magnificently, and a copy of his picture, which is in the Belvedere at Vienna, by Vandyck, was in the English National Gallery.

But Ambrose was not only a great Churchman in every sense of the word; he was also a poet and a musician. The noble hymn, *Te Deum Laudamus*, has been, perhaps rightly, ascribed to him; it is, however, certain that he wrote a large number of the best-known hymns of the Christian Church. Among them may be cited the three beautiful ones for the hours—'Before the ending of the day,' 'O strength and stay upholding all creation,' and 'O Christ who art the light of day.' As a musician he ranks with the greatest, and has been well named the first master of musical theory. If he did not invent he surely rediscovered plain-song, known as the Ambrosian Chant, an adaptation of the Greek and Hebrew antiphonal chant, which will ever remain the one true and pure form of sacred music. St. Augustine, in his 'Confessions,' gives an account of the origin of congregational singing among the Milanese followers of Ambrose. He tells how when the Empress Justina was led away by the Arians and began to persecute Bishop Ambrose and his friends, he, Augustine, wishing to pray with Ambrose and to defend him, began to spend the days and nights with him in his church. There was a large number of people present, among them St. Monica, Augustine's mother. That the time might not seem long to these faithful people Ambrose taught them to sing and wrote for them sacred songs. Augustine then goes on to tell in beautiful language the effect this responsive singing produced on his mind, 'bringing all heaven before my eyes.' St. Ambrose himself says the music of hymns should be plain and simple, such as can be followed by old people, women, and children. In reference to this subject the Italian poet Giusti's beautiful poem on the

Ambrosian Chant should not be forgotten. It closes with the exclamation, 'I must leave the place, or I shall embrace this Austrian sentinel who stands up here in front of me as stiff as a post.' Such has been the humanising and softening influence of the Ambrosian music as sung in Milan Cathedral on a great feast of the Church when the Austrian troops were still in possession of the Lombard capital.

St. Ambrose is one of the four great doctors or teachers of the Church, the others being St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and St. Thomas Aquinas. Strangely enough, considering his practical character, the theology of Ambrose is of a deeply mystical and allegorical cast. A work of his, called the 'Hexaameron,' seems to have anticipated the ideas of Berkley as well as those of Swedenborg and Jacob Boehm.

Not many legends have clustered round the name of Ambrose; his life was so much a part of the history of his time that mystery, which is the parent of legend, was absent from it. Still there are a few, and pictorial art has, of course, laid hands on them for the illustration of the life and work of this saint. It is needful to know them in order to understand these pictures. In his church at Milan is represented a heretic listening to his preaching, converted by the vision of an angel prompting his words. Ambrose once sent to the prefect Macedonius to solicit mercy for a condemned wretch. He was refused access, whereupon he said, 'Thou, even thou, shalt seek refuge in a church and shalt not enter,' and a short time after Macedonius, pursued by his enemies, fled for sanctuary to a church, and though the door was open he could not enter, but wandered about in blind perplexity until he was slain. The oft-told tale of the man who had no misfortunes and upon whom came sudden destruction, from which the saint, who was his guest, fled only just in time, has been told perhaps for the first time of St. Ambrose. It is said that St. Ambrose, while celebrating Mass in Milan, was present at the burial of St. Martin in Tours. When St. Ambrose himself was on his deathbed it is told that Christ Himself came to visit and comfort him. The Bishop of Vercelli, who was attending the saint, and who had fallen asleep, was awakened by an angel saying, 'Arise, for he departs in this hour,' and the bishop was but just in time to administer the Sacrament and see him expire. Those who were present saw him borne to heaven by angels. A picture in one of the chapels of the



Frari Church at Venice represents the saint on horseback chasing his enemies with a whip as he appeared in a vision coming to aid the Milanese against the imperial troops.

There is a custom at Milan by virtue of which three days of Lent are added to the Carnival; this is known as the Ambrosian Carnival, and was a special grace accorded by the saint to the Milanese, of which all, Catholics and Freethinkers alike, gladly avail themselves to this day.

Considering all he achieved and the times in which he lived Ambrose is indeed a grand figure, and he certainly greatly helped forward the power of the Church, as we must recognise if we merely remember the fact that but eighty years had elapsed between the persecutions of Diocletian and the humiliation inflicted by a Christian priest on Theodosius. He was energetic, he was impartial, he was absolutely in earnest—all qualities of great value in a rude and lawless age. Nor should those who long for the reign of universal peace forget that Ambrose was on their side, for was not the first idol he detroned the adored statue of Victory? In art Ambrose is usually represented in the dress of a bishop, bearing a lash, the symbol of remorse and penitence for sins; the three knots that are usually seen in it are intended to adumbrate the triumph of the Trinitarian views over those of the Arians.

HELEN ZIMMERN.

*OFF THE HIGH ROAD:*

THE STORY OF A SUMMER.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE, AUTHOR OF 'IN THE LION'S MOUTH,'  
'YOUNG DENYS,' 'MISS LATIMER OF BRYANS,' ETC.

---

CHAPTER XIII.

VIOLA IN THE FIELDS.

'I loved him not : and yet now he is gone  
I feel I am alone.'

THE fairy look of spring had disappeared from the hedges and trees, and the heavy green of summer was everywhere, far less beautiful, but weary haymakers rejoiced in the deep shadow laid upon the meadows by the great masses of foliage. It was a hot summer, varied by thunderstorms ; the air was often oppressive. There were not many wild flowers ; the wild roses and the honeysuckle soon faded in the hedges ; even the gardens flagged, and Jessie Downes spent a great deal of time carrying pails of water. Hezekiah quite declined to add anything of this sort to his daily duties ; he preferred giving his spare energies to the haymaking, though he was not particularly welcome in the meadows.

And as the summer dragged its length along, the refugee from a different world began to be restless in her rural prison. She knew all the short neighbouring walks by heart. She also knew the river banks intimately well, for a long way above and below the Slang, and she still shrank from going further afield, from venturing on the high road or into the town. For though she felt sure that she was securely hidden from the Marstons, she could not flatter herself that they were not still searching for her. Indeed, it seemed reasonable to expect that the search would become more energetic as the 1st of September drew nearer. She did not believe that Augustus

would give her up without a struggle. Some result might yet follow from that advertisement in the *Times* which poor Edwin Dampier had shown her.

That young man's sudden disappearance troubled Viola's pretty head a little ; whether it affected her heart at all, perhaps it would be unfair to inquire. Miss Fairfax of Northley had larger interests in her life than were likely to be touched by the comings and goings of a solitary admirer, a country bumpkin, unkind tongues might have called him ; a young fellow who might be of some little importance in his own neighbourhood, but certainly was of none anywhere else. Of course she knew that Edwin admired her, and in a more romantic fashion, perhaps with more sincerity, than she had been accustomed to. But admiration had for years been a matter of course. In London, when she came out, she had enough of it to satisfy ten ordinary girls, and in several cases it took a serious form, but never touched her heart in the least. Then her guardians took it into their wise heads that she was delicate, and that country air was the right thing for her. It had suddenly become plain to them that they must not risk all this indiscriminate society ; the prospects of Augustus were of too much importance to be struggled for on a public arena ; his father and uncle must forward them by using all the power they had. Augustus, however, having the field to himself, did not, it seems, know how to make use of his advantages ; for he only succeeded in inspiring Miss Fairfax with a dislike of himself which almost amounted to horror.

Viola had plenty of time to think over everything in these long summer days ; and perhaps sometimes, in spite of all she had found it necessary to escape from, she caught herself half regretting her old life. At least it was varied and amusing. Sir Henry Marston was always kind. If the General was hard and overbearing, there was some little pleasure in asserting her authority against his. If he was unscrupulous, there was excitement in outwitting him, and he was always remarkably handsome and gentlemanlike. She would never have run away, she thought, from either of her two guardians. Only Augustus was unendurable ; she still shuddered as she thought of him. It was from the society of Augustus, forced upon her against her will, that she had escaped into the wide world, and she could not sufficiently wonder that he had not yet traced and followed her.

However dull her haven of refuge might be, she was resolved to be hidden there till the 1st of September made her mistress of her own life and fortune. And it *was* dull. Not that she did not value the devotion of Mrs. Downes and Jessie, or was tired of their characteristic society, or impatient of the life which was attractive from its very unlikeness to anything she had ever known before. But the little flash of romance which had gilded the first weeks had gone out too soon, and there was nothing to replace it. Viola Fairfax was a well-born, well-bred girl, with her full share of strength of mind and common sense ; but she was a very human girl too, and she felt injured that her only companion, her only *real* companion, she repeated to herself, should have fled so unaccountably without even a word of farewell. The more she thought of it, the more odd it seemed, and the more inexplicable. She was sure that he had had no idea of such a sudden departure, when they were on the river together that day. His idea then was 'to fight things for her'—she could hear the deep young voice saying it, could see the worship in those handsome grey eyes of his—certainly not to desert her suddenly, to take himself off into a foreign country, where he could not possibly be of any use to her, however much she might want him.

She thought of those eyes, not without a little thrill at the remembrance, and wondered for a moment if she had behaved badly to him in any way. No, her conscience did not accuse her. She did not think she was a flirt by nature, and certainly she had not flirted with him. Perhaps she had sentimentalised a little, in response to his mood, which was too grave and earnest to be treated with the ordinary talk of every day. Besides, the circumstances were so peculiar.

What had driven him away ? Then it occurred to her that perhaps his father, who seemed to be looked upon with a certain awe by everybody, might have disapproved of the acquaintance with a girl of whom he knew nothing. That would indeed be very natural in his father ; but it was not natural that he should yield in silence, give up without showing any fight at all, and disappear with a suddenness which was absolutely rude. Yes, rude ! And altogether unlike him.

'If Colonel Dampier knew everything, he might have behaved differently,' Viola thought : and then she put up her hands to her cheeks, and was seized with sudden anger to find them burning.

After all, what did she care? What was this young man to her, or she to him, except the merest, the slightest acquaintance? Untaught, ill-bred—he had gone off to amuse himself with some equally ignorant and ordinary friends, no doubt, and to spend a thought of regret upon him was plainly, in Miss Fairfax, both ridiculous and undignified.

Having arrived at these false and unjust conclusions, she took her hat and went off alone for a walk in the fields. Jessie had gone down to the river, to the haymakers, and she had declined to go with her because of the sultry heat of the afternoon.

She walked along the hollow road by the rookery, where it was always shady, where the path was dark and damp with dead trodden leaves and the little springs that broke out of the bank here and there, gradually trickling their way down through the fir-wood to the river. She passed under the garden wall, old crumbling red brick, of the great house, and looked up as she went, but the wall was too high for her to see the house itself. Long rose-branches heavy with blossom were hanging over, and the air was full of their scent. As she came to a slight turn in the path, beyond which was the garden door, she heard the growling of a dog and the angry voice of a man, though man and dog were hidden from her by the angle of the wall. A few more steps, however, brought her within a yard or two of Mr. Joseph Arnold and old Don, Edwin Dampier's collie, who were disputing in a not very friendly fashion on the threshold of the door.

Matters changed a little when Viola came upon the scene. Arnold stepped back against the paling on the other side, to allow her to pass, and Don, who was lying growling on the broad step, became silent and suddenly beat with his tail against the stones. Arnold lifted his hat with rather a forced smile.

'Will you speak to the dog, Miss Field? he knows you,' he said. 'He don't seem inclined to let me go in this way, and really it's too hot to tramp all round by the drive.'

'I don't think he knows me very well,' said Viola. 'Come here, Don; why are you so inhospitable?'

'He has no master to go about with, so he's extra cross, and thinks it his duty to interfere with other people,' said Mr. Arnold, smiling under his moustache. 'He is an ill-tempered brute at all times. Take care; he might bite you.' I really

thought he would bite me just now. Do take care, Miss Field !'

She was caressing the old dog, who had now dragged himself up and was jumping upon her with every sign of affection.

'He won't hurt me, poor old dog,' she said. 'He was only trying to do his duty. I will hold him ; you can go in safely now.'

'Well, I'm sure I'm obliged to you,' said Joseph. 'His master would like to be here now, I expect—pity he didn't leave you the dog as a legacy. Seemed queer, didn't it, his going abroad in that sudden way ? Most people were quite at a loss to explain it.'

She felt the half-hidden impertinence in look and speech, and as she stooped over Don's shaggy head, Arnold staring at her, the clear colour flushed face and neck suddenly. But she raised herself at once, not looking at him, and pointed to the door with an air that was decidedly scornful.

'You had better go while I am holding his collar,' she said. 'And shut the door after you.'

Joseph Arnold had seldom felt so small. He had been out of temper before, and now he was furious. However, there was nothing for it but to obey her orders, which he at once did. He was not a coward, but Don was a large, powerful dog, showing signs of savageness, and no reasonable man cares to be bitten if he can decently avoid it.

'By Jove !' he reflected as he climbed the path, 'Jessie was right ; it wouldn't do to chaff that young lady. What a little firebrand ! And what an air ! As if all England belonged to her, not to mention Stepford Hall, and the inhabitants were the dirt under her feet ! There's something in that quarter evidently. I wish the Colonel's big mortgage were in my hands. I wish—confound 'em all ! Anyhow, that old chap shall be sold up, unless the Colonel chooses to stump up for him, which I expect he can't do. "Shut the door after you !" Is that the way to speak to Hezekiah, much less to *me* ?'

Viola soon forgot Mr. Arnold, though she had never before thought him quite so disagreeable. She reminded herself that Jessie would not care for a person who was really worthless. It must be all vulgarity ; the man could not help being vulgar, and she supposed he was good-natured. Jessie and Mrs. Downes, with all their wonderful merits, could not perhaps be

expected to see how horrid it was to be vulgar like Mr. Arnold. They thought it funny, poor dears. Viola felt that she could not confide her impressions of Mr. Arnold to anybody but Don, who was now trotting beside her through the fields with a satisfied air. She was touched by his friendliness. "We are both lonely, old doggie, are we not?" she said to him, and then she laughed at herself, blushing a little, and the collie looked up in her face and wagged his tail.

So they came at last to Stepford Hill, and going along by the shady path that skirted most of the village, overlooking the small, grey old church, a couple of farms and a few cottages scattered round an untidy green, they crossed the open ground in front of Harry Holt's farm. Beyond this, the long green slopes of the hill itself rose against a dark and threatening sky. Don declined to make any attempt to follow his new mistress over the five-barred gate, strengthened by thorns, which his master had helped her to climb on the first day of their acquaintance. He lay down in the shade and waited for her, panting with fatigue and thirst. Her light steps soon carried her to the top of the hill. As she stood there, looking round at the view in its summer dress of brilliant colour and deep shade, gazing longest, she did not quite know why, at the gloomy old house plunged among trees a mile and a half away, the storm that had been rolling up all the afternoon broke suddenly overhead. The darkened landscape blazed with lightning, and a heavy roll of thunder echoed round the distant hills, its clattering reverberations coming back and back across the river till they seemed to shake the solid ground on which Viola stood. Then the black cloud descended so low as almost to touch the earth, and down came the rain.

Viola's first thought was for Mrs. Downes's hay, which had already gone through more than one such experience. Then she perceived that in two minutes more she would be wet to the skin, for she had nothing but a light stick in her hand. So she started off and ran lightly down the hill, to find the gate standing open, and old Harry Holt waiting for her with a hayfork on his shoulder, and the rain dripping from the brim of his hat.

'Come in, Miss, come in and take shelter,' he called out. 'I saw it was coming, bless you! So I was putting the hay in cock in the orchard piece yonder, when you passed t'other side of the hedge.'

'I'm so sorry for your hay,' said Viola, as she hurried with the old man along his garden, followed by Don, who seemed eager for shelter.

'Well, I'm obliged to you, but it don't make much difference, you see,' replied Harry. 'Maria!' he called from the door, without explaining this curious sentiment, 'here's Mrs. Downes' young lady caught in the rain, and she'll take a chair and a cup of tea. And you can make up a bit of a blaze for her to dry herself at. You've got some sticks, haven't you?'

Miss Maria came forward, her black bonnet nodding as usual, and made a polite curtsey to Viola. Her old face was pale and stained with tears. 'Sticks to be sure, and coals too, by the ton,' said she. 'When you've no money, what does it matter how much you spend! My brother is that frivolous, ma'am. He's like the Emperor of China in the fairy tale that would go on fiddling while Rome was burning. Take a seat, if you please, and I'll soon make a good fire. You wouldn't think that Henry Holt was ruined, ma'am, by the way he goes on about things in general. Oh, my goodness! Do come in, Harry, and shut the door.'

These last exclamations were caused by a vivid flash that darted suddenly through the darkness of the kitchen. When the peal of thunder that instantly followed it had died away, Viola looked at her host and hostess, and perceived that there was something very wrong with the old brother and sister. Even Harry had been crying not long ago; his chubby face was swelled, his eyes were red and weak from some other cause than recent rain-water.

'Look at him now,' said Miss Maria, 'tempting Providence with flourishing that there hay-fork in the very face of the lightning.'

'Ah! And Providence don't seem to wish me too well, as it is,' said Harry.

He set the obnoxious fork carefully aside in a corner, and devoted himself to making his guest comfortable in his best armchair near the fire, which was burning up brightly, for his sister bestirred herself while she talked, and the kettle was already beginning to sing a lively tune over the flames. Viola took off her straw hat, and Harry, taking it from her with two careful fingers, shook the drops from it and hung it up to dry. He looked at her with his sweet smile, oddly pathetic on such a troubled countenance.



'No young gentleman with you to-day,' he said ; 'but he's left you his dog, I see.'

This was very different from Mr. Arnold's impertinence, and Viola smiled quite frankly as she answered that old Don had been lying by the garden door, and had followed her in her walk of his own accord. She knew that Harry Holt, with the slightest encouragement, would have gone on talking about his young squire. Somehow she did not wish that. She chose to set Don and his master on one side with as little mention as possible.

'I am afraid this weather is very bad for farming, isn't it ?' she said. 'Have you got in most of your hay ? Mrs. Downes has a good deal out still.'

'I'm always behindhand,' Harry answered. 'Mrs. Downes has luck in this life, ma'am, and I have none. I had a friend, but he's gone away to foreign parts ; and no sooner is he gone than the storm breaks on my poor old head.'

'What has happened to you ?' said Viola, kindly.

'Bless you, I won't trouble your gay young heart with the history,' said the old man. 'Maria, are you getting the tea ?'

'As quick as I can. Don't you be so pugnacious and unreasonable,' called out his sister, who was rattling teacups in the background.

'Don't make tea for me——' the visitor tried to remonstrate, but a courteous gesture of Harry's hand checked the words on her lips.

'As long as we're not actually *in* the workhouse, and can still call the teapot our own——' he murmured.

'But I should like to understand all this, Mr. Holt,' said the girl, earnestly. 'I am not particularly gay, I assure you. I know what trouble is, and if I can't help, at least I like to hear. Won't you treat me as a friend, and tell me all about it ? I don't mean that one friend is as good as another, but still——'

She looked up at the old man and smiled. With a bright colour in her delicate face, the damp brown hair curling loosely about her brows, her eyes shining, soft and kind, in the twilight of the room, she might very well have been painted as an angel—by Lionardo, for instance—for there was more in the face than mere sweetness ; it had its touch of mystery, of inquiring wistfulness. Life to her was not all straightforward, though she was beautiful, rich, and young.

'Well, I do believe you're as good as you're pretty,' said the old man.

‘No—yes, I mean——’ Viola could not help laughing, and Harry joined in with a merry peal; he might have been a schoolboy.

Miss Maria, looking rather fiercer than usual, fidgeted backwards and forwards with her tea-things, and the old man, drawing a chair near Viola, began to tell his story. Outside, the storm was passing away, though the rain still came splashing down the wide chimney and hissing in the flames of the fire.

Mr. Arnold would wait no longer. Harry owed him £700, and he was not his only creditor. Behindhand with rent, behindhand with everything, crippled by bad seasons and unlucky speculations, as well as by his own improvidence, Harry had come to an end of his resources, and bankruptcy—nothing less—now stared him in the face. That very day Mr. Arnold had been up to the Hill with his ultimatum. He had warned Harry over and over again that he must and would have his money, but the old man, incorrigibly hopeful and young of heart, never could quite believe in his own misfortunes or in the hardness of others. He and Maria thought so little of money; it seemed strange indeed that other people should stick to it so. Some day of course he would have to pay his debts; some day he would have to pay his rent to the squire; but in the meanwhile he found it very possible to live like the birds, with no thought of the morrow. Edwin Dampier had sometimes feared that the dear old fellow would have a rough waking some day, but, confident in his own and in his father’s patience, he had hardly expected Mr. Arnold to hurry things on to the point of ruin, and so he had done his best to laugh at Harry’s frequent apprehensions as to ‘that dreadful man.’ He had not considered what might be the effect of disappointment on the would-be purchaser of Stepford Hill Farm. He had been sure it was a good thing for Harry that his house and land should not pass into Arnold’s possession, and having saved him from that catastrophe, had gone away without any immediate anxiety as to his affairs.

Now Mr. Arnold had given Harry Holt his choice: to pay the £700 in a fortnight, or to be sold up. And the old man had no choice in the matter.

This was what he told Viola. He could not borrow the money without security; he could not go to his landlord, who had helped and spared him far too much already. He and

Maria must leave the old place, the queer, old-fashioned farmhouse, under whose low roof-tree so many generations of Holts had been born and died. Some of the furniture was nearly as old as the house. Arnold, looking round, had cheered him up by saying that those oak chests ought to fetch a nice bit of money now that such things were fashionable.

A gasping sob from Miss Maria here interrupted the harrowing tale. She was standing by the table, ready to pour out the tea.

'Does the young lady take sugar?' she growled out.

'No, thank you, not any,' said Viola.

She was surprised to find that her own voice was choked with tears, and that the room danced in a yellow mist before her eyes.

'Come, come, there's ups and downs in all lives,' cried old Harry, with a nervous chuckle. 'No use crying over spilt milk, Maria—and by the by, Master Edwin's dog would like some in a saucer.'

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### A NEW CONFIDANT.

'He was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.'

THE rain stopped, the sky cleared into a lovely evening, fresh and cool; and when Viola walked home from Stepford Hill, it was with a light step and a lighter heart. Old Don, too, seemed happy: he ran gambolling about in the wet green grass. The sun shone serenely over the meadows, where everything sparkled; all the weight and sultriness was gone from the air.

Viola had done her best to cheer the two old people; rather mysteriously, it is true, but still effectively. She had left Harry laughing at the garden gate, and had looked back to say to him—'Now, remember, you are not to think any more about this trouble for the next few days. I believe everything will be settled. Money is not of such great importance, after all.'

'Ah! except when you haven't got it,' said Harry. 'You're

a very kind young lady, and I'm sure you wish us well, and I wish Master Edwin was here to walk home with you, as well as his dog.'

Viola was not angry. She smiled her sweetest, and answered—'Do you know, Mr. Holt, I think I like dogs better than men.'

Harry shook his head and smiled as he gazed after her.

'That's a precious pearl, that is,' he said to himself. 'And whatever Mr. Edwin was thinking of, to go away and leave her for the whole summer, when they might have walked together every day, it beats me to conceive. Now I wonder if she'll really find us any way out of this here tangle. I *should* say it was impossible, but there's a look in her eye—however, if she's counting on getting the right side of that man Arnold, through Jessie Downes, I'm feared she's mistaken. That man do love money better than aught in the world, and he's a spiteful devil too.'

It seemed, indeed, as if Viola had some plan of the kind that Harry's quick wits imagined for her. As she approached the path that led under the Hall gardens, she was aware that Mr. Arnold and Jessie were coming to meet her. Quickly the thoughts that had been dancing in her head arranged themselves. 'Three plans. First, to trust this man to a certain extent—and surely, if Jessie can trust him so far, there could be no danger. Second, to go to Colonel Dampier, tell him all and ask him to advance it till September—but I would much, much rather not do that. Third, if the worst comes to the very worst, to write to Sir Henry. I should have to go back—but after all, though they would make life intolerable, they could not actually force that upon me. We will try the first plan. A little diplomacy. A vain creature like that can always be managed somehow. It is horrid—but I can't have these poor old people sold up. He would be so sorry; he is fond of the old man.'

This last scrap of soliloquy caused a little amusement to Miss Viola, and brought her with a smile and a pretty colour within a few yards of the two sturdy figures approaching.

Jessie had been anxious about her, and had very nearly started off in the middle of the storm with an umbrella to search for her. But Mrs. Downes had pointed out that by the time she got there the storm would be over. And then Joseph had come in, full of his own affairs, and rather indignant with

Colonel Dampier, who had sent out word that he was too much engaged to see him.

'That's all the interest he takes in his tenants,' observed Mr. Arnold. 'They might be sold up, one and all, for anything he cares; and yet he won't part with an inch of his land. If that's an old-fashioned landlord, I think they would do better with one of the newer sort, I must say.'

'Well, I don't know, Joseph,' said Mrs. Downes. 'If poor Mr. Holt had been your tenant, I fancy he would have been sold up some time ago.'

'And it would have been better for everybody in the end,' said Mr. Arnold.

'I don't see that it mattered much, your not seeing the Colonel,' said Jessie. '*He* couldn't have paid the money, and wouldn't, I daresay. Mr. Edwin would have tried to raise it somehow.'

'It's just as well that he's away. A bad example to the neighbourhood, encouraging idleness and dishonesty. I'm glad your young lady has sent him packing.'

Mr. Arnold had too much self-respect to describe the scene at the garden-door; and when he consented to walk with Jessie to meet 'Miss Field,' the soothing influences of her company, a good tea and a pipe, as well as the lightening of the atmosphere, which cleared his head and temper as well as other people's, had had altogether an excellent effect upon him.

In spite of this, Jessie was a little nervous when she saw Viola coming, for the intercourse between her lover and her friend was never satisfactory, and to a more sensitive nature would have been unbearable. But to-day everything went with the most extraordinary smoothness. These were quite a different Mr. Arnold and Miss Field from the two that had met and parted so unpleasantly near the same spot an hour or two before. Viola told them where she had taken refuge from the storm, and if she spoke of the old Holts with kindness and sympathy, she gave no sign of thinking Mr. Arnold a hard-hearted wretch for his treatment of them. In fact, so grave, so sweet, so reasonable was she, that Joseph himself began to feel almost soft-hearted. In quite a serious, feeling way he preached an excellent little sermon on the way in which farmers nowadays were too apt to let things slide till bankruptcy was their only resource. Viola listened, was instructed, agreed with him. He found her wonderfully

intelligent—"Now why isn't she always pleasant like this?"—and she by a look and smile conveyed to Jessie her approval of his clear head and excellent sense, thus making the good girl glow with happiness.

When they reached the farm, Arnold was going to walk straight on to Tarringford, but, to the mystification of both him and Jessie, their companion suddenly interfered.

'I wish you would come in, Mr. Arnold,' she said. 'I am quite sure you don't personally want to ruin this poor old man, and I have thought of a means of saving him—that is, if you will consent. I believe you are kind and good, so I think you will.'

'Excuse me, Miss Field, but I don't quite understand you,' said Joseph. 'Besides, you know, it's really a matter in which—well, I always say that business is better left to men. We may be a bit hard, but we're fair and just. Don't I always say so, Jessie?'

'Yes,' said Jessie, rather absently. 'Of course, Missy,' she added, with a shade of injury in her tone, 'nobody would *want* to ruin another person. But sometimes it's the only way——'

'This time I think it is not the only way,' said Viola.

As she met the man's keen and curious eyes, they struck her as being in rather odd contrast with the solidity of the rest of his face. And yet, on the whole, eyes and all considered, it was not a bad or an ill-natured face. Shrewd and capable too. His own interest would be first, of course; but that once assured, he would probably not be malicious. Harry Holt thought differently; but then he stood between the man and his interest.

'Excuse me, I see no other way,' said Joseph. 'And there's no advantage, it seems to me, in discussing the matter any further. So I'll wish you good evening, ladies.'

'No, Mr. Arnold,' said Viola gently. 'Not "good evening" yet, please. I am in earnest about this, and if you will come in, I will explain everything.'

Jessie, though she did not understand Viola's object, could not help smiling as she looked from one to the other. She saw that Viola's request was felt by Joseph, for once, as a command. This was nothing strange to her, but for him it seemed quite a new departure. He looked at Jessie rather wonderingly, as much as to say, 'Is your friend a little touched?' but then,

encouraged by her smile, he at once submitted, and followed the two girls into the house.

'Now wait for me a minute,' said Viola, and she left him and Jessie together in the kitchen. Mrs. Downes was not there.

Mr. Arnold had had hardly time to ask Jessie if she had any notion what all this meant before Viola was back again. She brought a small packet in her hand, and laid it on the table before him.

'Here is two hundred pounds,' she said.

He looked at the packet, and looked at her. There was no fear now of his not taking her seriously. The keen gravity of his expression was not spoilt now by any vulgar joking or affected politeness. He was a business man at work, and a clear-headed one too.

'Excuse me if I don't understand you yet, Miss Field,' he said, after a moment's awkward pause. 'But—is Mrs. Downes foolish enough to let you keep all that money in the house here?'

'It is my money,' said Viola, with a touch of impatience. 'Mrs. Downes knows nothing about it. Yes, you must understand me. I want you to take this in advance, in payment of Mr. Holt's debt to you, and to accept my promise that you shall have the other £500 on the 2nd or 3rd of September. I shall be of age on the first, and completely independent.'

'Oh, Missy!' exclaimed Jessie, under her breath.

Joseph Arnold suddenly pulled a chair to the table and sat down, though the others remained standing. He took the packet, unfolded it, and counted the notes carefully while they looked on. Then he folded them together again, fingering each one in a thoughtful, deliberate way, and looked up into the proud, eager young face with a curious question in his eyes.

'It is very kind and generous of you,' he said, 'to take the old man under your protection in this handsome way. He ought to be uncommonly obliged to you, Miss Field.'

There may have been the faintest touch of a sneer in the words, but there was none in his look or manner, and Viola chose to be unconscious of such a possibility.

'I want no thanks from him or anybody else,' she said. 'I only want you to say that you accept the offer. His thanks will be due to you, if you will wait till September.'

'You propose to write me a cheque, then, as soon as you 'ave a cheque-book?' said Joseph slowly.

'Yes.'

'But—excuse me—I don't know who you are, and I have no means of knowing that you will have £500 to throw away in September.'

Viola flushed suddenly and angrily. This want of confidence had not entered into her calculations at all.

'Oh, Joseph!' exclaimed Jessie, and Mr. Arnold turned upon her with an injured air.

'There's no cause to be indignant,' he said. 'Remember that whatever *you* may know about this young lady, *I* know nothing. Tell me something more, or give me a reference. I'm not refusing to do what she asks, but I must protect myself, as any reasonable person would see.'

'If I tell you it is all right, you ought to be satisfied,' retorted Jessie.

'I don't know. You and Mrs. Downes are a bit romantic,' said Joseph, with a short laugh.

'Well,' said Jessie, 'you are not risking much, after all—only a little delay. If you don't get the money you can sell Mr. Holt up in the end.'

'That's not the way I like to do business,' Joseph replied.

Jessie was going to argue further, but Viola came nearer and silenced her with a touch.

'Mr. Arnold is right,' she said. 'How can I expect him to believe in me—a person apparently with no friends, who came from nowhere? He is right, too, when he says that you and Mrs. Downes are romantic, Jessie. Who else in the world, I wonder, would have taken me in on my own account of myself, without any sort of reference. And I have none to give you,' she added, looking at Joseph.

He and Jessie stared at her as if fascinated. Then Joseph rose suddenly to his feet and said, with quite a new air of respect, 'Well, madam, if you will tell me, or allow Jessie to tell me, what caused a lady like yourself to take lodgings in this neighbourhood—in fact, some of the circumstances that induced Mrs. Downes to receive you, as you say, without reference of any kind—I will close with your offer regarding Henry Holt's affairs. I don't think I can put it in a more satisfactory shape than that, Jessie?'

Viola paused a moment. Jessie came closer to her, and in her good, dark eyes the prayer might be read plainly—'Tell him—trust him—he deserves it.'



'Thank you, Mr. Arnold,' said Viola, very quietly. 'The circumstances that you want to know are rather painful. My father died some years ago—he was rich, and I am his only child. He left me in the care of guardians who did not make a very good use of their power. I left home to escape from their tyranny, and I want to remain hidden from them till I am of age—as I told you—on the 1st of September. After that they have no more control over me or my affairs. Mrs. Downes saw my advertisement, and most kindly took me in for the summer. She and Jessie have kept my secret, and I am sure I can trust you to keep it too. And let this money affair be between ourselves, please—at any rate for the present. Just tell Mr. Holt that you will not press for the money.'

Joseph stared in silence.

'Well,' he said at last, 'I'm sure I'm sorry for you, Miss Field. It sounds a wild sort of proceeding, though, doesn't it? These guardians of yours—what do they think about it, then? Do they think you are dead? Haven't they set the police looking for you? It might be rather awkward for us all, don't you know—I wonder it hasn't got into the papers! Never heard anything so curious in all my life. Awfully hard on your guardians—I'm glad I'm not one of them.'

'Don't pity them,' said Viola, smiling. 'They will be released from their anxieties in a few weeks now. They brought it all on themselves, you see. Then it is settled about Mr. Holt—you will take this money to begin with—and shall I sign a promise to pay the rest?'

These last words were no sooner out of her mouth than she regretted them. What had she said? What would be the use of signing anything with the name she chose to bear at present—more than useless, it would be dishonest!—and she had no intention of telling this good man what even Mrs. Downes did not know. Jessie only had her full and entire confidence.

Jessie perceived the mistake at the same moment with herself, and both girls started, though imperceptibly to Mr. Arnold, who was just resolving on an act of magnanimity. Perhaps he wished to prove himself a worthy connection of the Downes family.

'Miss Field,' he said, rather solemnly, 'I will take no money and no signatures from you at present. I disapprove of what you have told me, as every man of sense must, but I'm not going to take advantage of it. If you will allow me to put this

two hundred pound in the bank for you, I'll do it with pleasure, for I don't call it safe to keep such a sum in the house ; but I won't take it from you in any other way. I'll let Holt know that circumstances have altered, and that I can hold my hand till September.'

He was not to be moved from this course of action. Jessie was delighted, and Viola liked him better than ever before, and shook hands with him in quite a new and cordial fashion.

Joseph walked away from the farm sincerely pleased with himself. These agreeable feelings, however, did not last very long. By the time he reached the bridge he felt a little worried about the whole business, and was beginning to wonder why he had been so soft-hearted. He rather wished this mysterious young lady had taken refuge anywhere but at the Old Slang Farm ; and he was not altogether pleased that Jessie had thought it her duty to keep the strange story a secret from him.

## CHAPTER XV.

### IN PURSUIT.

'O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out  
Against the wreckful siege of hurrying days ?'

It was the 15th of August. This had for centuries been a festival day in the village or hamlet of Stepford ; but if you had asked any of the present inhabitants why, they would have been unable to tell you, with the possible exception of the old rector of the mother parish three miles away. The little church of St. Mary, Stepford Hill, had always been a kind of chapel of ease to the church at Allington, and was served by its clergy. But the whole *régime* being old-fashioned, the Stepford people were not much visited except on Sundays by either rector or curate, and in consequence of this the services were melancholy and the congregations thin.

The only day in the year on which Stepford generally woke up from its sleepiness in church matters was this old feast-day, the 15th of August. The people knew it 'had something to do with the Church' ; it was therefore the right thing at Stepford to attend the 12 o'clock service, and the little church was generally full. It was a holiday : all absent members

of families came home if they could ; the local clubs marched to church with their banners ; all the men of the place dined in a large tent, where in the afternoon the women and children had tea ; there were games, races, and dancing on the green.

Ever since Joseph Arnold had known the Downes family—he had now been engaged to Jessie for more than a year, but the friendship was of much longer standing—it had been his habit to bring his trap from Tarringford early in the afternoon, and to drive Mrs. Downes and Jessie over to Stepford Hill. By the time they started, Hezekiah Gibbs, looking less like an old prophet than usual in his Sunday clothes, had come back from the service and the dinner to take charge of the farm for the afternoon. There was never any difficulty in bringing Hezekiah back from the festive scene. He said candidly, ‘I can’t abear to see folks enjoying themselves. It makes me that miserable !’

On this special 15th of August, Arnold and Jessie had agreed to carry out the old arrangement, for Jessie thought it unlikely that Miss Field would care to go to the feast. If she did, the two girls could walk across the fields together, while Joseph drove Mrs. Downes round by the road. But from what her guest had said, Jessie thought she would certainly prefer staying in the garden. This was a satisfactory prospect to Joseph, for though he was on pleasanter terms with the young lady than earlier in the summer, he never felt quite at ease in her presence, and looked forward with satisfaction to the end of her stay at the farm, now drawing, as he supposed, very near.

On the morning of the 15th something unexpected happened to Mr. Arnold, which brought him to the farm rather later than usual, a good deal excited, and not alone, for a stranger was with him in his dogcart. He left his companion outside, and put his head in cautiously at the back-door of the kitchen. He saw Mrs. Downes sitting alone with her bonnet on, evidently expecting him.

‘Welcome, Joseph, though late,’ she said. ‘You are to have no company but me, I must tell you. Miss Field thought she would like to see the feast, after all, so she and Jessie started by the field way half an hour since.’

‘Miss Field gone out !’ said Joseph abruptly, and rather angrily. ‘Well, that is unfortunate !’

He stood staring at his future mother-in-law with such a

strange and flushed countenance that her usual calmness almost gave way.

'And, pray, why shouldn't 'she be gone out?' said she. 'What in the world is the matter, Joseph?'

'It's no use,' said Arnold, coming closer to her. 'You'll get yourself into ever such a mess if you persist in harbouring that young lady. She had no business to run away from her legal guardians, and if she don't return to them at once and quietly, they will be down here to fetch her.'

'How do you know that?' said Mrs. Downes, her eyes very wide open.

'A gentleman, who has been employed in the search for this young lady all over the British Empire, came to me this morning,' replied Joseph. 'His credentials were such that I couldn't refuse to bring him over here, to see her with his own eyes.'

'Couldn't you?' said Mrs. Downes. 'And what do you suppose Jessie will say to that? About the most disagreeable and unchristian thing you could possibly have done, Joseph Arnold. Take your gentleman away, if you please—a detective, I suppose—I've always feared something of the kind. He shall not have a sight of Missy, if I can prevent him. I haven't sheltered her all this time to fail her at the last, and you might have known as much.'

There was a little sound at the door, and Joseph turned his head that way.

'You had better come in, Mr. Black,' he said.

'If you were at the door, sir,' said Mrs. Downes, extremely angry, 'I needn't repeat what I have just been saying. This house is mine, and you are not welcome in it.'

A smart little man stepped forward into the room, not discouraged by this reception.

'Madam,' he said, 'I am sorry to seem intrusive, but I am employed by two highly respected gentlemen, the guardians of the Honourable Viola Fairfax, to discover the whereabouts of that young lady. Her disappearance has caused the most serious anxiety to a large and distinguished circle. I was led to think, through my inquiries in this neighbourhood, that Miss Fairfax was residing under your roof. Mr. Arnold's valuable assistance——'

A look of strange bewilderment flashed across Mrs. Downes' handsome face, but she spoke very decidedly.

'I beg your pardon, sir. That is not the name of the young lady who is living with me.'

'Ah—excuse me—but this is the young lady's portrait, is it not?' said Mr. Black, advancing with small, cautious steps, and holding a photograph before Mrs. Downes' eyes. 'Mr. Arnold recognised it without difficulty.'

Mrs. Downes stared at the photograph. The two men glanced at each other, and the stranger smiled. Joseph Arnold found the matter too serious.

'What name do you give this young lady?' said Mrs. Downes, after a pause; and in all the years he had known her, Arnold had never seen her look more puzzled or more distressed.

After all, he thought, could it signify so very much to Mrs. Downes that the girl should be traced by her rightful guardians? According to what he had just been told, she had behaved in a wild, unnatural, reckless way; she had been dishonourable and deceitful, masquerading under a false name, and giving the utmost grief and anxiety to her relations, for no reason better than a freak. Mr. Black, the very intelligent and well-spoken agent of a Private Inquiry Office, had clearly explained the whole truth of the matter, which included some very startling information as to the truant's position and fortune. It was plain that she had completely misled Mrs. Downes and Jessie, appealing to their pity for a person who certainly deserved none. Joseph Arnold felt injured and angry, for them as well as for himself, and his earlier jealousy returned in full force.

'No wonder she was so free with her hundreds,' he thought. 'She can afford to be charitable!'

Perhaps, too, he would not have been human if, considering all the circumstances, he had not been a little influenced by Mr. Black's mention of a reward of a thousand pounds offered by Sir Henry Marston for information leading to the discovery of his lost ward. It was true that he could not hope to pocket the whole of this, for the Tarringford superintendent of police, who had sent Mr. Black to him as the one Tarringford person who could give particulars of the lady lodging with Mrs. Downes, would probably put in his claim. Still, Joseph felt that the labourer was worthy of his hire. All these excellent thoughts, however, did not prevent him from feeling also very uncomfortable. He was sincerely fond of Jessie Downes, and

respected her with all his heart. Knowing her affection for 'Miss Field,' he knew that he was going the way to make her desperately angry with him. Mrs. Downes' trouble and indignation were only a foretaste of what he had to expect.

She sat there holding the photograph, Viola's sweet and refined face smiling upon her, yet with that touch of sadness which made it the more attractive in real life too.

'What did you call her?' she said again, sharply and hoarsely.

'The Honourable Viola, only daughter and heiress of the late Viscount Fairfax,' replied Mr. Black in smooth tones; and while the old woman sat with her head bent and her eyes still fixed on Viola, he went on with a string of particulars as to her guardians, her flight, the search that had been made for her, ending with what he evidently thought the most startling and important facts of all.

'The guardians offer a reward of one thousand pounds, of which you, madam, may probably be in a position to claim at least a share. It will be considered that under your roof the young lady has probably been free from fortune-hunters. That is important, since on her twenty-first birthday she succeeds to half a million of money.'

Mr. Black made an impressive pause. Mrs. Downes said nothing; she hardly seemed to have heard him.

'I rather suspect,' said Mr. Arnold rashly, 'that if a certain young gentleman in this neighbourhood had known of that half-million, he would not have been in such a hurry to take himself off abroad.'

'Hold your tongue,' said Mrs. Downes; 'you ought to be ashamed of yourself.'

She lifted her head so suddenly, and there was such youth and spirit in the indignant fire that flashed from her brown eyes, that both men were silenced for the moment. Joseph Arnold coloured crimson, and did not attempt to defend himself.

'Do you expect me,' said Mrs. Downes to the stranger, 'to believe your account of Miss—of Miss Field—sooner than her own?'

'Mine is the true account, madam,' said Mr. Black. 'If this photograph, which you evidently recognise, is that of the young lady staying in your house, you have been entertaining the Honourable Viola Fairfax. I may also show you these

newspaper cuttings—' he laid before Mrs. Downes the *Times* advertisement which Edwin had cut out so long ago and the paragraph that he had read in London.

Mrs. Downes took them up with a trembling hand, and put on her spectacles to read them ; she had wanted no such help to recognise Viola.

Without waiting for any remark from her, the agent went on—'It is supposed that Miss Fairfax took with her various possessions by which she can be easily identified. For instance, a pair of silver-mounted brushes with the coronet and initials of her late mother, Viscountess Fairfax.'

Mrs. Downes blushed visibly, but said nothing.

'Come, you must know about them,' ventured Joseph, recovering his courage ; and this time he was not so severely snubbed as before.

'Whatever I may know or not know,' said Mrs. Downes, 'I tell you plainly that I will be no party to giving up a sweet young lady into the hands of her enemies. Much that this gentleman has told me I knew already ; but I also know what he doesn't tell, and what this newspaper gives a broad hint of—that her guardians proved themselves unworthy of their charge, and that their conduct, and no freak of her own, sent her out into the wide world to seek a shelter. And she found it here—and if she has lost it—well, it is your fault, Joseph, and if Jessie forgives you, I don't think I ever can. I won't believe so ill of you as that you have done it for the sake of a few wretched hundreds ; if I did, you should never with my consent be son-in-law of mine.'

'Hush, hush—remember we are not alone,' Arnold whispered angrily ; while the other man, smiling to himself, turned politely aside and pretended to be busy with some papers. 'Mr. Black will tell you that the fault was on Miss Fairfax's side,' Joseph went on aloud, and that the guardians are dear old gentlemen, respected by everybody.'

'Oh, indeed !' said Mr. Downes. 'And now what next, pray ? Is Mr. Black a policeman, and has he got a warrant to arrest Miss—Fairfax ?'

'No, madam, I have not,' said Mr. Black. 'My duty is to find the young lady, and to convey the information to my employers. I have already telegraphed that I had a clue, and I think it not impossible that Mr. Augustus Marston, Sir Henry's son, who is deeply interested in the matter, may

run down to Tarringford to-night. In the meanwhile I shall get Mr. Arnold to drive me on to this village feast, that I may compare the photograph and the original to my own satisfaction. Is it any use delaying here, sir?' he said, turning to Arnold.

'Well, I don't suppose it is. And now, Mrs. Downes, will you care to come to Stepford, under the circumstances? You see, it's no use trying any further concealment. I'm sorry if you are vexed—and Jessie—but business is business, don't you know, and justice must be done.'

'Ah! go your way, Joseph, and don't trouble about me,' said Mrs. Downes.

He waved the other man to the door, and went up to her, holding out his hand.

'Come,' he said, 'you're accused of no crime. You thought you were doing a kindness, and if it was a mistaken one, why, nobody's going to blame you. When I say I'm sorry, I mean it, and Jessie's got to understand me, if you don't. A girl can't be kept out of the way of her legal guardians, especially when there's half a million of money concerned—you see that, don't you?'

'Don't speak to me,' said Mrs. Downes.

He stood looking at her for a minute with a worried air. He had always known that women were unreasonable, but had flattered himself that she and Jessie were in some ways wiser than the rest of their sex. If Jessie took her mother's line of absurd indignation because this pretty runaway was likely to be restored to her rightful belongings, he foresaw bad times for himself. Yet what could he have done? He had told the agent very little: he could not help recognising the photograph; he could not very well have refused to drive him over to Stepford. He did not see that he was bound in honour to shield this Miss Fairfax from discovery, just because she had herself told him something of her circumstances, when pleading with him for old Harry Holt.

'It's a confounded plague to be mixed up with women's affairs, and that's the long and short of it,' Joseph Arnold concluded in his own mind.

'Then you won't come up to the feast, Mrs. Downes?' he said.

'I have already told you to go your own way,' she answered very low. 'All this upsets me more than enough. Leave me alone, and I'll be obliged to you.'



He shrugged his shoulders, and followed the other man out of the house.

Presently Mrs. Downes heard the wheels rolling away, and all was still.

She sat for some minutes in the same place, thinking ; and as she thought, she became convinced of two things ; first, that the stranger's statement was true, as far as it concerned her guest ; second, that Jessie had known it all the time. She might have been rather hard put to it to explain this last conviction, but it was there. A certain mysterious caution that Jessie had sometimes shown in speaking of Missy may partly have accounted for it ; also a kind of reverential fuss that Jessie made about the girl, and the nervous anxiety she showed sometimes to stand between her and any breath of vulgar intercourse. Then Mrs. Downes had sometimes found the two girls deep in talk which stopped when she came into the room, and though she was free from small curiosity, this had not failed to leave its impression.

'They might have trusted me too,' Mrs. Downes thought with a touch of pain : but then she told herself, 'I dare say 'twas for my own sake they didn't. I might have found it more awkward, entertaining anybody like that.'

At this point Edwin Dampier, never far absent from her thoughts, suddenly began to occupy them, and his old friend, set off on a career of guessing, chose to imagine that he had somehow found out the true story, and had run away in consequence.

'Just like him, bless his heart. What would keep other young fellows dangling after her would be sure to send him away. Can she have told him herself ? no, that isn't likely. I wish he was here now, for I should most uncommonly like just to talk to him, and see if there's no means of keeping Missy's freedom for her. Seems as if an old woman like me can do nothing. Mr. Edwin, I wish you were at home, my dear ! I declare ! I know what I'll do.'

Colonel Dampier was disturbed in his library by the unusual circumstance of a knock at the door. It was a strict rule, which Locke had never been known to break, that the Colonel's working hours were not to be interrupted. Edwin, to be sure, strolled in and out when he was at home, and knew by instinct whether he might or might not speak to his father ; but since he went, the silence of the old house had almost been un-

broken. Yet, to tell the truth, the 'History of Battles' had not advanced in a time that seemed so favourable. Colonel Dampier missed his interruptions; missed the boy's step in the hall, his figure lounging in the window. He spent hours reading Edwin's letters, which were regular and long, and following his movements with map and guide-book; then he sat down and wrote him long letters in answer. Under his cold and passive exterior, the old man's heart and thoughts were full of Edwin. He rehearsed the last evening's talk to himself, over and over again, and wondered in silence why the boy had chosen to banish himself. Of course he could have done nothing better; but yet—was it that George Good-enough had bitten him with a wish to see the world? or was it that he cared too much for that mysterious girl, and dared not run the risk of seeing her again? Or might he be more indifferent than his father fancied, and willing enough to snatch at freedom and forgetfulness? Anyhow, he gave no sign of returning, and the Colonel was careful not to express a wish on the subject.

He was writing to Edwin that afternoon, when the knock at the door startled him disagreeably. If it had been Locke, a word of sharp reproof might have followed; but it was Firkins, and Colonel Dampier never spoke roughly to a woman.

'What is it, Firkins?' he said, with an effort at patience.

'If you please, sir, Mrs. Downes wishes to speak to you.'

'I am busy. What can Mrs. Downes want! You had better tell her I am engaged.'

'I did tell her,' Firkins said. 'But she specially wanted to ask your advice about something, and so she over-persuaded me to come and beg as you would see her for a few minutes.'

'Ought I?' said the Colonel rather nervously. 'What can she want? I thought everybody understood that business must wait for Mr. Edwin's return. Where is Locke?'

'You gave him leave to go up to the Feast, sir.'

'I remember. Very inconvenient. People take the opportunity to spring an ambush upon me. Ask Mrs. Downes to come in. And don't be far off, Firkins, in case I want you.'

Firkins went off smiling; perhaps because she liked to be necessary; perhaps because it gave her pleasure to see Mrs. Downes in distress.

In truth, it was as much as Mrs. Downes could do to walk

as far as the Hall, and she had arrived so much exhausted that Firkins offered her a glass of wine, which she refused. The only thing she wanted was to unburden her mind to the Colonel.

Though such near neighbours, landlord and tenant very rarely met ; but their opinion of each other was steadily high, except when Mrs. Downes felt inclined to rebel in Mr. Edwin's interest, or when the Colonel was angry with her for taking in a stranger. He was so at the present time, and with reason. This did not prevent him from receiving her politely, and asking her to take the only comfortable chair, Edwin's chair in the window.

'I am very sorry to intrude upon you, sir,' said Mrs. Downes in her stateliest manner, 'but I am in trouble, and I want your advice.'

Colonel Dampier bowed.

'It is about the young lady who has been spending the summer with me.'

Colonel Dampier looked very grave.

'Pardon me,' he said with some stiffness, 'but if that young person has disappointed you, I must say you have only yourself to blame. It cannot have been necessary for you to receive her at all. It is always better to keep clear of people who cannot or will not give a satisfactory account of themselves. Well, Mrs. Downes,' he went on more kindly, 'what has she done? Gone away in your debt, I suppose.'

'Dear me, no, sir!' said Mrs. Downes, and she could not help smiling. 'I have not a word to say against her. But I shall have to tell you a long story, I'm afraid. She turns out to be somebody quite different from what I thought, and some sort of detective has come down to look after her.'

'Good gracious !'

The Colonel started up from his desk, and came forward to Mrs. Downes, standing before her with a face of consternation.

'My good friend, what have you done !' he said with eager interest, while from his heart there arose a little psalm of praise.

'Anyhow, thank heaven, my boy is out of this.'

'Well, sir, I have done nothing,' said Mrs. Downes calmly. 'It's no crime to be ignorant, I suppose, and I couldn't be expected to know what was not told me. My young lady came to me under the name of Field, which seemed a common

name and nothing extra grand, though the glance of half an eye told you that *she* was superior. Now it appears that she is the daughter of a lord, and heiress, they say, to half a million of money. So this man says, at least. I haven't had a chance of speaking to her face to face, for she has gone over to the Feast with Jessie.'

'What is her name?' asked the Colonel impatiently.

'He called her the Honourable Viola Fairfax.'

'It is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard in my life,' said Colonel Dampier, more to himself than to Mrs. Downes.

He turned away, and walked twice up and down the room. His hasty footsteps, and the strangeness of his manner, bewildered Mrs. Downes, and her eyes followed him almost distractedly.

'Then Firkins was right!' he said. 'Daughter of Lord Fairfax. Granddaughter of Lord and Lady Kilkenny. Amazing, if it is true. Is it true, Mrs. Downes? And what, pray, were you saying about a detective? I should like to understand the whole thing clearly, if you please.'

Mrs. Downes wished the same. She had no conception what he meant by referring to Firkins, Jessie not having found it necessary to repeat that good woman's remarks to her mother. She looked up almost pleadingly at Colonel Dampier as he stood before her, wakeful and interested to a degree that was rare with him.

'I don't quite understand myself, sir,' she said. 'I don't know what Mrs. Firkins has to do with it. But perhaps I had better tell you the whole story from the beginning as far as I know it. Then you'll do what you think right—though I don't know that you'll choose to do anything.'

'Of course it is no affair of mine,' said the Colonel rather gruffly. 'But if this lady is the person I suppose, I knew her father once. Go on, if you please.'

Mrs. Downes went on immediately. She told him everything, and kept nothing back, from her first sight of the advertisement, and Edwin's remonstrance, all through the summer till that very afternoon. Though she frankly confessed that Miss Fairfax had not entirely trusted her, she spoke of her with an enthusiasm of affectionate admiration which was not without its effect on Colonel Dampier as he listened. It was not only Edwin's heart, then, that this mysterious girl had captured. Of course he did not say this to Mrs. Downes ;

and after the first, she left Edwin's name as much as possible out of her story. The Colonel felt this, and gave her credit for her discretion.

When she had done, and paused a little out of breath, full of the silent question, 'What is to be done next?' he rang the bell sharply. Firkins came without a moment's delay, and glared with fierce curiosity from one to the other as she stood inside the door.

'Firkins,' said the Colonel, 'be good enough to tell Mrs. Downes what you told me, of the extraordinary likeness between your former mistress and the lady who is staying at the farm.'

'Well, sir,' replied Firkins, 'I told Miss Downes, and that was as good as telling her mother, I should have thought.'

'Never mind. Repeat it,' said her master.

Mrs. Downes listened, and now was convinced of what she had thought probable, that Jessie had known all and had been bound to secrecy, otherwise she would certainly have gone straight to her mother with so curious a story. Mrs. Downes felt herself flushing under Firkins's ill-natured eyes; but after all, it did not matter now; and in another moment Firkins herself had forgotten any such small triumph in the extraordinary facts her master was telling her—that she had not been mistaken, that the likeness to Lady Kilkenney was not accidental, that it was really the granddaughter of her old mistress who had fled from unworthy guardians and hidden herself here in the depths of the country, where in all human probability she would have found no friends to help her effectually in such a day as had now dawned.

'Then it is my young lady!' cried Firkins, bristling all over. 'And where is she now, and why ain't we all looking after her!'

She had hardly spoken when the bell at the front door rang with a loud and long peal. For a moment the three looked at each other; that sound sent the same odd thrill through each of them. Then Firkins without a word dashed out of the room.

*(To be continued.)*

*CORNELIUS.*

HE was a very small boy when first I saw him at Farningford Fair.

He was standing by the gingerbread booth, and when questioned he said he was the man in charge. He wore a shirt of indefinable colour and a voluminous pair of corduroy trousers which buttoned over his shoulders. He was preternaturally solemn, in spite of his dirty face, and seemed fully alive to the responsibility of his position.

By way of opening the conversation, I invested in a sticky and clinging gingerbread quadruped which might have been intended either for a hippopotamus or a cow, and he gave me change for sixpence with business-like precision.

I inquired who his people were; he raised a pair of very blue eyes to mine and replied, 'Please, miss, what's that?'

Just then a sad thing happened. Some big boys came by, armed with certain instruments of torture sold in the fair under the name of 'Ladies' Tormentors.' With shouts they surrounded the man in charge and commenced an assault upon him. He bore it bravely for a while, but presently a stream of water from a squirt caught him full in the face. Then he seemed suddenly overwhelmed by his friendless condition, his stoicism deserted him, and he fled weeping to the next stall, to bury his head in the skirts of the woman who sat there. He was very small, he could not have been more than eight.

The woman addressed one or two forcible remarks to the retreating forms of his aggressors, and I ventured to approach, tendering consolation in the shape of a penny, which had an immediate reviving effect.

I asked his name, and he replied, with a return of dignity—  
'Cornelius.'

When he had run off to take out the money in cocoanut-shies (four a penny, and his aim was astonishingly precise), I said to the woman—

'Your little boy has an unusual name.'

'He's not my son. As to the name, his mother would have it so.'

She spoke very well, though the tone was barely civil. But I had recognised her accent, and my heart warmed to her.

'You're a Scotchwoman,' I said.

'That may be,' she answered.

My compatriots are nothing if not cautious in their speech.

'I am from Scotland myself,' I said.

'Ay, I knew the twist of your tongue when ye began to speak.'

She was not encouraging, but I lingered yet a moment.

'It's but seldom that people of our nation take to this life.'

'Did ye think I belonged to these wandering folk?' she said, looking round on the booths with contempt. 'I come out once a year for the fair; my shop's in the town by the kirkyard; ask any one for Mrs. Brown.'

'Is that your name?'

'What else should it be?' she retorted sharply.

I wished her good-night and left her. My society was evidently uncongenial to her. The next day the fair was broken up, and the ground was nearly cleared when I went down to look at it.

A few urchins were playing cricket where the booths had been, and amongst them I recognised Cornelius. The game was peculiar, and owing to the eccentricities of the wicket (a coat) and the pitch, the players had framed a number of original rules over which their disputes were lively and frequent.

They had a bat, but the ball was a hard one, and bits flew off it when it was hit.

Cornelius was the smallest of the boys, but it was plain that by the force of his personality he ruled the rest. He was taking an innings when I came up, and he stayed in determinedly in spite of all the remonstrances of his friends, having been several times clearly run out (his legs were short if sturdy), once stumped, and once caught brilliantly in the long field by the man stationed in the ditch some three yards off. A judicious change of bowling was attempted, and a dashing over-arm bowler went on whose balls invariably fell in the centre of the pitch and gave Cornelius quite a run to meet them. This went on for half an hour, and then, after a lively discussion as to whether the batsman, having accidentally trodden on the

wicket, was legally 'out,' an interval was called, and the eleven adjourned for refreshments.

The joint funds of the club, when collected from various pockets, amounted to one penny, in the shape of a halfpenny and two farthings, and, after earnest consultation, two members were despatched to expend it.

The others gathered round Cornelius, and as I neared them I heard his voice announce—

'The name of this story is "The Bloody Shirt and the Diamond Hilted Dagger."'

A visible shudder ran through the group at this awe-inspiring commencement.

'Cornelius,' said I.

He evidently remembered me, and he jumped up and came to me looking rather shy.

'Cornelius,' I said, 'have you any pennies?'

I knew he hadn't, and he shook his head. 'Would you like to earn some?' I inquired.

I meant to be diplomatic in my method of approaching the subject.

Cornelius thought he would, but was not sure.

'My name is Mrs. Macdonald,' I said. 'I am an artist, I paint pictures.'

He evidently knew what that meant, for the entire young-lady population of Farningford was generally to be found scattered up and down the village street on sketching-stools while the summer weather lasted. It was an artistic place. 'I am painting a picture now,' I went on; 'if you will come and sit for me every morning in the garden at the "George" I will paint you and put you into the picture, and you shall have pennies besides.'

A mental vista of unlimited pennies arose before him, and we concluded our bargain on the spot. He ran back to his companions, and I saw him relating the tale to them with animated gestures. From their admiring looks I guessed that he was probably exalting the position of an artist's model into one of undue dignity.

As I walked down the street I met the vicar's sister toiling up the hill with her usual heavy basket from which the ends of several large vegetable marrows and a cucumber protruded. I stopped to tell her what I had done.

She looked very doubtful.



'Have you asked the aunt?' she said. 'I am afraid, indeed, I am nearly sure, Mrs. Macdonald, that she won't allow it.'

'We are both from bonnie Scotland,' I said laughing. 'I am going down to try my hand on her now. She is his aunt, then?'

'She says so,' she answered rather uncomfortably, 'but I believe that—in the village—the relationship is supposed to be closer. She is a peculiar woman, the neighbours don't get on with her; she is very reserved, and no one knows much of her antecedents. She came here years ago when Cornelius was a baby, and has been here ever since. And I must say,' added Miss Harris, 'I have always found her most respectable and hardworking.'

'And the boy?' I asked. The vicar's sister looked distressed.

'The boy—oh, Mrs. Macdonald, Cornelius really is a dreadful boy! I don't know, I do *not* know what can become of him when he grows up. I had him in my Sunday-school class for a time, and he gave me more trouble than all the others put together. I thought he might be better with a man, so I got Mr. Jervis' (Mr. Jervis was the curate) 'to take him one Sunday, and in the middle of the lesson he brought out a dirty old Christmas-card with a picture of a—of a *pig* dancing in a college cap and gown on it, and asked Mr. Jervis if *he* was anything like that when he was at college. It was really very distressing, because Mr. Jervis is rather like a pig, and he was very angry indeed, and turned Cornelius out of the room. And now he doesn't come to school at all.'

I was laughing.

'I understand boys,' I said. 'I have a boy myself, and I don't think he'll ever die of being too good. I'll take my chance with Cornelius.'

I went to see Mrs. Brown, and though she received me with suspicion, I managed to thaw her partially, and when I preferred my request it was acceded to, on condition that I would promise not to 'put any ideas into the child's head.' I assured her that I would not. My family have always impressed upon me that my ideas are too few and far between to be lightly spared.

Cornelius arrived for his first sitting almost unrecognisable. His aunt had submitted him to a searching examination with the scrubbing-brush, and he had on his Sunday shirt. His trousers were apparently considered passable, for they were

untouched. I tried to pose him, but he was on his best manners, and was so stiff and awkward that I could do nothing with him. I was on the point of giving it up in despair when a happy thought occurred to me.

'Cornelius,' said I severely, 'at the end of this garden amongst the bushes you will find a little boy. I think he is making mud pies. Go and help him and come back in a quarter of an hour.'

I saw his eyes brighten as he went. At the end of half an hour I went after him. He had proved a better confectioner than my small son, and together they were entering upon the loftier paths of architecture, being excitedly engaged in the construction of a mud castle, from which I extricated them with difficulty.

After that the painting went on easily, for the prospect of a game with my Ian and his fascinating tin soldiers would keep Cornelius quiet for any length of time.

The two became great friends; often while Cornelius was posing Ian would come and sit by, and his pleading, 'Mother, tell us a story,' set me racking my brains for half-forgotten fairy tales and folk legends. These I found were generally repeated by Cornelius for the benefit of his own select circle, added to and improved upon by additions of a blood-curdling description.

I was not long in discovering that Cornelius was different to the ordinary run of village boys.

His aunt had taken some pains with him; the soft Scotch accent which he had from her saved him from the coarseness of the rustic Kentish dialect; the dash of the Celt in him gave him his vivid imagination; he was full of an instinct for mischief which was almost diabolical, but never a word passed his lips which Ian might not hear, and his transparent truthfulness protected him from the consequences of his worst misdeeds. I confess I was startled one day when, returning from a walk, I encountered two small naked figures, armed with bows and arrows and long sticks, lurking behind the bushes in the front garden.

And their explanation that they were 'ancient Britons stalking the deer' hardly consoled me for the empty and flabby condition in which I discovered my last tube of ultramarine, although as Ian said, 'Mother, the ancient Britons *always* wore woad, and of course Cornelius and I couldn't go deer-stalking without any clothes at all!'

Miss Harris disapproved strongly of the intimacy between the two, and remonstrated with me on the subject. Although I assured her that they could do each other nothing but good, she remained unconvinced.

It was a little unfortunate that on this occasion we happened to meet the pair hurrying home in a truly scandalous condition, and their confused account of how they had fallen into the pig-trough whilst prospecting in a delightful farmyard evidently made no favourable impression upon her.

Cornelius could keep Ian quiet for hours telling him wonderful stories, or playing games in which they respectively assumed the parts of 'an Emperor' and 'the Pope,' being the highest dignitaries of which they had any knowledge. The adventures of these heroes in the garden of the 'George' were both extensive and peculiar.

I came upon them once sitting in judgment upon an imaginary prisoner, and was in time to hear the terrific sentence pronounced (after consultation) by Ian as leader of the tribunal.

'Cut off his head, and throw it into the fields for the cows to eat !'

Several of these carnivorous animals were peacefully grazing close by at the time. I imagined that a reminiscence of having been severely kicked by one which he had attempted to ride had perhaps given his Imperial Majesty an exaggerated idea of their ferocity.

Farningford is the centre of the hop-growing district, and early in the autumn hop-picking commenced. I spent my days in the hop-gardens, sketching and making friends with the pickers : honest country folk for the most part, for the farmers round did not encourage the importation of labour from Whitechapel.

Close to us there was an oast-house belonging to one of my rustic acquaintances, a curious barn-shaped building with the round, cone-topped turret which is so familiar in Kentish scenery. Thither I received an invitation one night to see the process of drying and packing the hops, and Ian accompanied me.

He was much fascinated by the great 'hop-pockets,' seven foot sacks of stout canvas, suspended by the mouth through a hole in the floor ready for filling.

Packing by hydraulic pressure was yet unknown in Farning-

ford, and when a man descended into the pocket disappeared from view and commenced to trample his way upwards upon the hops which were thrown down to him in shovelful, Ian's delight knew no bounds.

It was a weird sight: the huge gloomy loft lighted by a single lantern, the heaps of hops, the rough faces of the men on which the uncertain light flickered as they wielded their big, short-handled wooden shovels, and the steady thud, thud of Jonas Iggulden's feet as he trampled the hops, his head just beginning to appear above the level of the floor.

Ian was deeply interested; he talked ceaselessly all the way home, and I vaguely promised to take him again 'some day.' A week went by, and one afternoon I went to return a call at a distant country house. I left Cornelius and Ian together, not without misgivings, and with many injunctions to 'be good boys and keep out of mischief.' The landlady promised to have an eye to them.

I returned rather late, and went into the garden to find them.

They were not there. They were not in the house. Mrs. Dadson, when I asked her, confessed that she had been busy and had not seen them for some time. The tea hour was past and I grew anxious.

I went into the road and walked a little way towards the woods, inquiring of people and calling. Coming from the church I met the vicar and his sister. Miss Harris was a person of no tact, and she exclaimed at once—

'I do hope they have not been playing near the pond! I noticed that the railings were broken away this morning.'

It was the one dangerous place within reach and I felt a little chill at my heart. Mr. Harris broke in hurriedly.

'Nonsense, Caroline! The boys are safe enough, Mrs. Macdonald. You go home and I will look round for them.'

But I would not go home, and an hour went by without sign or news of them. Half the population of the village was out and about by this time, calling, searching, and calling again, but there was no answer, nor any trace of the two little figures I was yearning to see again.

Another hour passed. It was eight o'clock and the dews of the early autumn evening were falling. They had made me go back to the inn, promising to come for me at once should there be any news of the lost children. Miss Harris was with me; she did her best; but as the darkness fell my misery

increased and I could hardly stay still. Mrs. Dadson called Miss Harris to the door once and I started up joyfully, but it was only to catch the ominous word 'drags.'

'Not the pond! Oh, not the pond!' I cried, and I rushed out. 'Mr. Harris, they shall not drag the pond! Tell them they shall not!'

'My dear Mrs. Macdonald, pray try to be calm,' he said. 'There is no question of dragging the pond. I have telegraphed to your husband, and before he comes nothing shall be done.'

I went back and sat down on the sofa, clenching the cushions in both of my hands as I strove to keep quiet and straining my ears for a sound.

Mrs. Brown remained in her cottage alone and shut her door against the crowd of would-be sympathisers who tried to enter.

Nine o'clock. Still no sign. Mr. Harris had organised search parties who were out all over the woods and fields with lanterns, shouting and calling—inquiring everywhere on the road for news of the children.

Until my life ends I shall never forget the horror of that evening, the sickening suspense as the slow hours went by, the dreadful vision which would rise up in spite of my efforts to crush it, of my Ian's beloved little form, with wet curls and closed eyes, beneath the cruel waters of the pond; the aching longing which dragged at my heartstrings; the coming and going of the searchers; the confusion of light and darkness; Mr. Harris's kind, anxious face; the crowd of curious, sympathetic women; Miss Harris crying and trying to hide it.

Ten o'clock. I remember the dull, regular sound of the strokes of the church clock as it floated across the village to us. It seemed to strike on my heart. The cries of the searchers had ceased; there was a deep silence. Suddenly a shout came through the distance.

I started up, holding my breath. The shout was repeated nearer. Surely it was a joyful sound. People were coming up the road. Mr. Harris went out hastily. Voices outside, yes, glad voices, that was certain now. Miss Harris burst into tears.

I rushed to the gate. A group of men were coming towards us, some one was being carried, but in front a little figure ran

to meet me, and as I caught Ian in my arms faces and lights whirled round and I fainted.

The story was very simple when they told me next day.

The little boys had got tired of their games in the gardens, and Satan, ever ready to find mischief for idle minds, had suggested to Ian the idea of Jonas Iggulden's oast-house.

Thither they went, found it empty and for a wonder open, and easily clambered up to the loft.

Now Iggulden was a careful man ; he had been at work there during the morning and suddenly remembering that the door had been left unlocked, returned, fastened it, and went off in his spring cart to an outlying farm with the key in his pocket.

The neighbours knew that the place was always shut up when not in use, and having tried the door concluded that it had been locked all day.

Meanwhile Ian and Cornelius up in the loft enjoyed themselves greatly, and finding a hop-pocket ready for filling Ian was seized with a desire to do a little amateur hop-tramplng. He slipped down and, of course, could not get up again.

I extracted the tale from him by degrees ; how Cornelius had run to get help, and finding they were shut in had come back and descended into the sack himself to extricate Ian ; how they were unable to reach the top, and had been penned for hours in the narrow space amid the stifling heat and the pungent smell of the hops.

'Weren't you frightened, Ian ?' I asked.

'I did cry,' he confessed. 'Cornelius didn't. Cornelius is awful brave, mother. He said we'd play at being kings hiding in a secret chamber from our enemies, and soon some one would find us. And he tried to let me stand on his shoulders, so's I could breathe better. And then he cut a little hole in the sack with his knife and the air came in and he made me put my mouth against it to breathe. And he tried to poke it bigger and the knife went through and got losted. And then he went to sleep and didn't answer when I called him and I was dreadfully frightened, mother ; and then I heard a noise and I howled, and Mr. Iggulden comed and took us out.'

Cornelius was ill for some days ; he had been taken out unconscious, and with his imaginative, nervous temperament had suffered far more from the adventure than sturdy Ian, who had had the advantage of being nearer the air.

Jonas Iggulden's return to fetch a lantern that he might join the search party was providential, for the doctor told me that had they been left all night in the sack among the hops neither of the children would have been found alive.

Cornelius got well and we finished the sittings for my picture. The summer was over and very reluctantly we said goodbye to Farningford and came back to gloomy, foggy London.

There was a heartrending parting between the boys; they bestowed on each other small dirty gifts very precious in their own eyes, and I gave his aunt for Cornelius a watch and chain as some sort of a reward for his unselfish devotion to my little son.

We went back to London and the winter passed. My picture was sent to the Academy, and to my surprise and delight was accepted and given a good place on the line in one of the first rooms. 'The Childhood of Pan' was even supposed by some to be the sensation of the year. The Academy had been open three weeks, when one afternoon a card was brought to me bearing the inscription, 'Captain C. Vaughan,' and underneath 'Indian Staff Corps.'

I did not know the name, and went down in some surprise.

A tall, well set-up man rose to meet me.

'I hope you will excuse an utter stranger intruding upon you,' he began at once. 'I am afraid you will think the question I have come to ask you an odd one. I have seen your picture, "The Childhood of Pan," in the Academy and I am anxious to know if you had any model for the central figure of the boy.'

I was surprised, but I answered readily.

'I certainly had—it was Cornelius——'

He uttered a sharp exclamation and turned pale under his bronzed skin.

'Please excuse me,' he said. 'You say the boy's name was Cornelius—when and where did you find him—if you would be so kind?'

'His name is Cornelius Brown,' I said—'at least that is his aunt's name; I've never heard his own. I found him at Farningford in Kent, where I was staying in the summer, and got him to sit for me. He lives with his aunt——'

'With an aunt!' he interrupted. 'There is a resemblance—a wonderful resemblance—I think he may be the child of

some one I once knew ; if you could give me the address I should be most deeply grateful.'

I wrote it down for him and he went away. The incident was a curious one and I wondered if I should hear any more of Captain Vaughan.

In a week's time I received an excited letter from Miss Harris.

'A most astonishing thing has happened. You remember your little *protégé*, Cornelius ? A few days ago a strange gentleman arrived in the village and put up at the "George." He inquired for Mrs. Brown and went at once to see her. He stayed two days and then went away, *taking Cornelius with him*. To all questions Mrs. Brown simply says that her sister's husband came to fetch his son. We think it most mysterious. I hope there is nothing *seriously wrong*.'

I was deeply interested.

The next afternoon Captain Vaughan called again. He came into the room looking very happy.

'I have come to thank you,' he said. 'To thank you, partly for helping me to find my son, and partly for your great kindness to him.'

'Your son !' I exclaimed breathlessly.

'Cornelius is my son. I think you have a right to know the story, for from all accounts you have been a good friend to him——'

'You are not obliged to tell me anything unless you wish it,' I interrupted.

'I should like you to know,' he said gravely. 'I must try your patience a little at first, for I must begin a long way back. I was an orphan under the care of a guardian. I was not to come of age until I was twenty-five. My money was absolutely tied up, and one condition of my father's will was that I should not marry without my guardian's consent. I entered the Service, and when I was twenty-four I went to spend my long leave at a country house in the North. There I met—my wife. She was nursery governess to my hostess's children, and I fell desperately in love with her at first sight. I proposed, she accepted me. She was utterly unworldly, knew nothing of my position, and she loved me. I broached the subject to my guardian ; he refused his consent point-blank. We agreed to wait the year until I came of age. Then, suddenly, war broke out in the Soudan and I was ordered on active service. I could not bear to leave her. She was lovely



and as innocent as a child. There was another man in the case and I was fool enough to be wildly jealous. I implored her to marry me secretly. I was a selfish young brute, of course, but nothing makes a man more selfish than jealousy. She, poor child, loved me too well to refuse and she never thought of herself. We were married. She had no family; she had been brought up in a Scotch village by a step-sister, a hard, cold sort of woman much older than herself; she had had a superior education, and when Mrs. Vane came to the place in summer, took a fancy to her and wanted to take her back to England as nursery governess, she was allowed to go. She was a lady by everything but birth.

'We expected that the campaign would be very short, and that I should be back and able to make her my wife in the face of the world by my twenty-fifth birthday. I went to the front. I had regular letters from Rosamond for a while, then suddenly there was a stop and then I received one in which she told me that she had been obliged to leave her situation and was living very quietly in a suburban lodging on the money which I had fortunately left her. She hoped and longed that I should be back before her child was born. I wrote to her to send at once for her sister and tell her the story of our marriage, but letters got lost in those days, and mine never reached her. I could not get home and I heard no more until I had her last letter.'

He touched his breast.

'My poor Rosamond! I have it here; it is always with me. She said she hoped I should not be very angry, but that she had so dreaded being alone in her illness, and she had sent for her sister. She should tell her she was married, but not to whom. She had hidden all my letters and everything which could give any clue. She was such a child, poor darling—only seventeen, and she had an idea that some dreadful harm might come to me if our marriage were known. That was all I ever heard. I never had another letter. I wrote and wrote again, and even at last trusted the secret to a lady I knew, and asked her to go to the lodgings. She went. There was no one there. The landlady told her that—that—my Rosamond's boy had been born in the house, that the mother died within a few hours, and that her sister had gone away almost at once, taking the baby. My letters lay unopened. There was no address left.'

The tears were in my eyes.

'I never got any trace of them,' he said, 'until I saw your picture, and noticed at once the extraordinary likeness between the boy's face and that of my wife. Then when you told me his name, and I knew it was the same as my own, I was nearly certain, though it seemed wildly impossible. I went down to Farningford at once, and—I have got my son.'

'Where is he?' I asked.

'I left him at the hotel.'

'Oh! I am certain he is in the most awful mischief!' I exclaimed; and we both relieved our overwrought feelings with laughter.

'Why was Mrs. Brown so secret about it?' I asked.

'I told you she was a hard woman. It seems that she did not believe that her sister was married at all, as she persistently refused to say who her husband was. And the end was very sudden, she could not have spoken if she would.'

'What are you going to do with Cornelius?'

'I shall take him abroad to some out-of-the-way place where we shall have time to get used to each other. When he is a little older he must go to school. He's a fine little chap, I think.'

'He is indeed,' I said; and I told him the story of the oast-house.

Cornelius is at Charterhouse now; he came to see me the other day, and received my congratulations on having passed into Sandhurst.

His father is very proud of him, and I know that in his secret heart he thinks that his son bids fair to be a worthy representative of the race of warriors to which he belongs.

KATHARINE HILLS.

## *THE ECCLESIASTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PLANTS.*

---

It was recently said by one of our most scholarly prelates that the fault of modernism lies in defective imagination. The rush and struggle of a fevered civilisation has killed off so much of the poetry which can invest the simplest things with charm, and, not wholly to lose it, we do well sometimes to seek out the traditions of an older world, and to gather up the fragments that are left of its fancies. Among these, few are richer in associations of a sacred and touching order than the appellations of flowers and herbs, derived from the teaching of the Church, in days when the observances of religion gave the keynote to popular sentiment. It is an easy task to frame from these plant-names an ecclesiastical calendar, capable indeed of far fuller development by any who care to follow a delightful bye-past of investigation, as to which the ensuing notes may stand in the relation of a sign-post. To begin, one of the earliest, as it is assuredly among the fairest of our English blooms, is the Helleborus, or Christmas-rose, called by old writers Christ's Herb. And an interest specially national, linked with the traditional mission of S. Joseph of Arimathea to our island, attaches to the famous Thorn of Glastonbury, blossoming on the birthday of the Saviour. It is certain that Glastonbury was a primitive shrine and centre of the Faith, and that its miraculous Thorn was in request in foreign parts, Bristol merchants trading with its sprays as objects of piety. In Elizabeth's reign the tree was partly hacked down by a zealous Puritan, and the chronicler records, not without complacency, that this destructive work was checked by the flying upwards of a chip, and consequent damage to the assailant's eyesight. During the Great Rebellion, the Thorn

went the way of many other precious things; a 'military saint' chopped it down to the roots, yet withal its growth was not entirely stopped, for we are told that in 1753 the Holy Hawthorn of S. Joseph refused to conform to the New Style, flowering on Old Christmas Day in defiance of the amended almanack. And even in this material age, the legend of the blossoming staff has not entirely died out, for the local press of the county of Essex a year or two since published some paragraphs on the subject of a 'Holy Thorn' at Woodhouse Ferris, popularly believed to burst into leaf on the eve of the Epiphany (Old Christmas Day), and annually visited by a number of persons desirous of beholding the marvel. The parish clergyman confirmed the original notice in the local paper as having 'a certain foundation in fact,' he having ascertained from credible witnesses that the thorn produces buds and green shoots in the depth of winter, and, occasionally, even small May blossoms. He further wrote that the thorn was in a decidedly exposed situation, and that it certainly was of considerable age; other correspondents suggested that it was the result of a quickset from Glastonbury; and neighbours of the bush, which grew in a remote corner of the parish, declared that the colder the winter the better is the show of verdure and flower. A curious survival of the ancient, semi-mythical story of

'Glastonbury, where the winter-thorn  
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.'

The Feast of the Epiphany claims the shining clusters of the ornithogalum, or Star of Bethlehem. Lent leads us to the Narcissus growing wild in country places, and enjoying the very musical name of Lenten lily. An antiquary wrote in 1797 that these wild daffodils were called 'Gregories' at Frithelstoke in Devon, where formerly stood a monastery of Canons of S. Gregory, the illustrious 'Father, who sent us our faith,' whose name remains in the Calendar of the English Church, March 12th. An expressive title is given to the Narcissus poeticus by the botanist Dr. Turner in 1538, when he mentions it as 'growing plenteously in my Lord's garden at Syon, and called of divers, whyte laus tibi,' a name to us unmeaning until we find its explanation in the old rubrical direction that from Septuagesima to Maundy Thursday the

versicle 'Laus tibi, Domine, Rex eternæ gloriæ,' should be sung instead of the Alleluia. This latter ascription of praise lends a lovely name to the delicately carved blossoms of the wood-sorrel, as we read in Gerard's Herbal (1597) that it was called Alleluia because 'when it springeth forth and flowereth the cuckoo singeth most, at which time also Alleluia was wont to be sung in churches,' *i.e.*, between Easter and Whitsuntide, when the Lenten penitential tones passed into the major key of joy. Among Lenten plants may be reckoned the Rue, or herb of grace, emblematic of repentance by reason of its bitter taste and its remedial virtue. Ophelia says, 'There's rue for you, we may call it herb o' grace o' Sundays.' Palm Sunday is in England associated with the golden-powdered velvety catkins of the willow, gathered by the country-folk, while in many churches the ancient rite of the benediction of palms is now revived, and there is a brisk importation of real palm-branches from the sunny South; it is only a shallow and prosaic estimate of human nature which would condemn such speaking ceremonies as this of the distribution of the palms, for undoubtedly they powerfully assist the teaching office of the Church, and, as was said by a great statesman in quite another connection, 'ceremonies are the salt of life.' Approaching to Passion-tide, it may be noted that in Cheshire the *Orchis maculata* is known as 'Gethsemane,' and, in the Highlands, the *Persicaria*, with its dark-spotted leaves, is associated with the Agony in the garden, and the dropping of the Precious Blood. It is supposed that the symbolism of the *Passiflora* was first brought into notice by the Jesuits; its five-fold leaves and corolla may well have seemed to portray the Five Wounds, its radiating nectarium the Crown of Thorns, its cylindric column the pillar, its antheræ the nails. Actually, the Coronal of the Passion is believed to have been plaited from the *Paliurus*, named in old works Christ's Thorn. This prickly shrub may be found in the country around Jerusalem, and is grown in England as a shrubby plant. The Feast of the Resurrection possesses the *Anemone* or Pasque-flower, with its rich purple colour, dear to the old glass-painters, and the starry *Stichwort* was known in Devonshire as Easter Bell. The processional litanies of the Rogation-days are commemorated by the milk-wort (*polygola*), formerly called procession-flower, gang-flower, or cross-flower. Gerard says, 'It doth especially flourish in the Cross or gang weekes, or Rogation weekes, of

which flowers maidens use in the countrie to walk the procession do make garlandes or nosegays.' For 'Pentecost, the feast of gladness,' we have the Guelder Rose, vulgarly called Whitsuntide boss ; the Rocket, the Whitsun gilliflower of the old botanists ; the Pink, whose name is derived from the German Pfingsten ; the Angelica, styled in the same language, 'des Heiligen Geyst Würzel,' or root of the Holy Ghost ; also the South American orchid, called the Santo Spirito from the resemblance borne by its bloom to a white hovering dove. The Trinity has a floral dedication in the Viola tricolor, or Herb Trinity, the pansy of three colours. After these high solemnities of the ecclesiastical year, the lesser festivals will be found to be no less rich in the material of our subject, and, as might be expected, many touching and tender flower appellations belong to the Blessed Virgin and to her celebrations in the calendar. Earliest in the year, the Snowdrop is hailed in the rural districts of France as 'Notre-Dame Février,' while among our own Cotswold Hills the name of Candlemass Bells is sometimes applied to these same harbingers of spring. In our climate, the Lily of the Annunciation cannot brave the rough March winds to grace 'Lady Day,' yet the early Italian artists who placed the stately flower in the hand of Gabriel, or beside the figure of the Madonna, would have looked upon its glistening clusters in their Arno valleys, and from them we have learned to link its radiant purity with the 'Lily of Eden's fragrant shade.' A long list might be compiled of the flowers lovingly assigned to the Mother of God in the popular vocabulary, as, for example, Lady's Bower, Lady's Cushion, Lady's Seal, Lady's Slipper, Lady's Bedstraw, the 'Lady's Smock, all silver-white,' of Shakespeare's song, and many more, all of which in the old herbals have their full prefix as flowers of 'Our Lady,' although they are now mulcted of the possessive pronoun, the sign manual of a Catholic origin. It is interesting to conjecture that the name Rhadyn Mair, Mary's Fern, links our flower-lore with the venerable Church of early Britain ; this fern was specially used at a later date in Wales for decoration at the Feast of Corpus Christi. In Italy the Toad-flax exchanges its ugly sobriquet for the far sweeter title of Erba della Madonna. The *Ornithogalum pyramidale* is sold in the Paris market as 'l'épée de la vierge,' a name its spear-like flower-spikes seem to warrant, while in country places the white bindweed has been called 'Manchettes de

Notre Dame.' Such titles might be catalogued almost *ad infinitum*, and it is time to proceed to the numerous flowers connected with the Saints. It is probable that the Campanula acquired its name of Canterbury Bell from the pilgrims who traversed the fair county of Kent on their way to the shrine of S. Thomas à Becket in the Cathedral; for Gerard states that it 'grew plentifully in the low woods and hedge-rows of Kent, Sittingbourne, and Greenhythe.' The lesser delicate bells of the Convallaria also came to be associated with the Metropolitan See, for the Lily of the Valley remains to our own day the flower of the Archbishops of Canterbury. S. Thomas is commemorated December 29th, and commencing from this date as nearest to Advent, we pass on to some January hagiological notes, and find that S. Geneviève, the patroness of Paris, has for her flower the Trio Persica, or fleur-de-lis, for so many centuries adorning the banners of France. The 3rd of January is the fête of S. Geneviève; the 4th that of S. Titus, whose emblem is the hazel; while the 8th brings us to S. Gudule, patroness of Brussels, and reminds us that the yellow lichen has been called S. Gudula's Lamp. The Ivy belongs to S. Paul the Hermit, January 15th; the Wind-flower to S. Antony, on the 17th; the Snowflake, or the Helleborus, to S. Agnes, on the 21st.

King Charles the Martyr—whose restored commemoration is yet another token of renewed loyalty to those Catholic essentials for which he sacrificed his life—has not hitherto been popularly associated with any flower. His coronation on the Feast of the Purification, and the name subsequently applied to him of 'the White King,' justified as it is by the incontestable purity of his life, may suggest as his emblem the Snow-drop, the 'Candlemass Bell' of English flower-lore. A wreath of snowdrops, it may be added, was laid as a votive offering upon the case in the Stuart Exhibition containing relics of 'our own, our royal Saint,' on the anniversary of his martyrdom, January 30th. S. David, patron of Wales, will recall, so long as Shakespeare is read, that homely vegetable the Leek, immortally linked with the Principality. It is supposed that the association dates from the battle of Bosworth Field, when the yeomen guard of Richmond, the future Henry VII., was composed of Welshmen, and his army also included a large number of these his countrymen. The

Harleian MS. No. 1977, written by a Welshman of the time of James I., contains the following lines :

'I like the leek above all herbs and flowers ;  
 When first we wore the same, the field was ours.  
 The leek is white and green, whereby is meant,  
 That Britons are both stout and eminent.  
 Next to the lion and the unicorn,  
 The leek's the fairest emblem that is worn.'

It may be noted that the Tudor colours were white and green, and, as may be seen in several heraldic manuscripts, formed the field on which were placed the English, French, and Irish armorial bearings.<sup>1</sup> Passing over the 12th of March, the black-letter festival of S. Gregory the Great in the Calendar of the English Church, the wild daffodils, sometimes called 'Gregories,' having already received notice as a Lenten bloom, we come to S. Patrick, who should not have been arbitrarily exiled from our own Calendar ; March 17th honours the patron of Ireland, and the legend of the shamrock, gathered by the great missionary Saint to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity, as he preached to the rough Keltic chieftains in the verdant pastures beneath their mountains of Wicklow, gives a beautiful example of spiritual truth taught by a parable of nature. The symbol appealed to the converted race, and the Shamrock remains the badge of Ireland, national and Catholic. The 19th of March is dedicated to S. Joseph, and although this Saint is frequently depicted carrying a lily, the oleander is held to be his special flower in Italy. The wild hyacinth belongs to S. Dorothea, March 28th. S. George, patron of England, has the rose, and the old custom of wearing the 'queen of flowers' on the festival of the Saint, April 23rd, is reviving in popular favour. The feast of S. Barnabas, June 11th, was of old time honoured in the City of London by 'the decking of churches with sweet lavender, woodruff, and box,' as recorded in the Churchwardens' accounts for S. Mary-at-Hill, temp. Edward IV. Also, Glastonbury boasted of a walnut-tree which regularly burst into leaf on S. Barnabas' Day, and the Barnaby Thistle belongs to the Apostle. S. John Baptist's Day, June 24th, recalls a curious shrub with fleshy pods, the Ceralonia, supposed to have formed the food of the Baptist in the

<sup>1</sup> See Knight's 'Shakspeare,' notes to *King Henry V.*



desert, and known as S. John's Bread. The Hypericum, S. John's Wort, was in request as a charm against evil spirits ; Gerard refers to the plant as growing in the country thickets of St. John's Wood—a statement as strange to the modern mind as are his allusions to the Arrowhead and the other water-plants to be found in the Tower Ditch. In old works the Red Campion (*lychnis minima*) is called Jerusalem Cross, or Knight's Cross ; the shape and serrated edges of the flower resemble a Maltese Cross, and doubtless it flourished in the ancient gardens of the order of S. John of Jerusalem, at Clerkenwell. The white Pink (*cermorla alba*) has been called 'sweet S. John's.' A forgotten minor Saint has given his name to the Deptford Pink, or Sweet William. S. William of Rochester was a Canterbury pilgrim, murdered by highway robbers while taking the journey, and buried in Rochester Cathedral, where his shrine was venerated ; to this day the wild Sweet William may be met with around the Cathedral city, it being a native Kentish flower. On the 29th of June we observe the Feast of S. Peter. The Snowberry (*symphoria*) is S. Peter's Wort. The Samphire, being a marine product of the rocks, received the name of 'S. Pierre,' of which its English style is a corruption ; and it is not without virtues ; Shakespeare's samphire-gatherer was in quest of it for the purpose of making pickles ; Drayton in his 'Polyalbion' alludes to the plant in the same connection, when he describes those who 'rob Dover's neighbouring cleaves of sampyre' ; and in recent days the sea-plant has been utilised for an excellent soap. This by the way, for we must pass on to the common cowslip, formerly called Herb Peter, and in Germany Schlüssel Blume, from a far-fetched resemblance to the Keys of the Apostle. In England the Rag-Wort was dedicated to S. James the Greater, and was valued as a safeguard from the evil eye, and in France the plant was called 'Fleur de S. Jacques.' The Jacobœa Lily was termed by the Spaniards, when they discovered it in Peru, the Lily of S. James, its brilliant scarlet petals reminding them of the red velvet sword-scabbards worn by the Knights of Sant'yago, patron of Spain. S. Margaret's Day is July 20th, and her flower, the Marguerite, or Paris Daisy (*Chrysanthemum frutescens*), is often to be seen in mediæval stained-glass, or in the illuminated pages of books of devotion destined to the use of royal ladies, namesakes of the Virgin Martyr. On July 22nd falls S. Mary Magdalene's

Day; the Bellis Major or Great Daisy was once known as Maudelen Wort. S. Anne is commemorated on July 26th, and the Corn Feverfew (*Manicaria*), a kind of wild camomile, having medicinal properties, was dedicated to the Mother of the Blessed Virgin. August 4th brings us to S. Dominic, to whom sometimes has been assigned the Harebell (*Hyacinthus nonscripsus*). As the Sunflower (*Helianthus*) lifts its golden disc, we may note that of old it bore the appellation of S. Bartholomew's Star, flowering at about the date of the Apostle's Feast-day, August 24th. The true Michaelmas Daisy is the Virginia Star-Wort (*Aster Tradescanti*), and it has come to be associated with the angelic host, the 'Stars of the morning, so gloriously bright,' whose festival is kept on September 29th. For S. Bruno, October 6th, we have the S. Bruno's Lily (*Anthericum liliastrum*), a flower to be seen in some parts of Switzerland, and possibly named by the monks of the Carthusian order in honour of their founder, for they were notable horticulturists, and up to the Revolution of 1793 possessed a celebrated garden of eighty acres near the Luxembourg at Paris. October 13th is the Translation of S. Edward the Confessor; his emblem was the rose, and at least in one parish church dedicated to him, that of S. Edward, Romford, the roses of the Confessor adorn some of the 'ornaments.' S. Leonard, Abbot and Confessor, is locally associated by tradition with S. Leonard's Forest in Sussex, where, according to the legend, he slew a dragon, yet not without a sharp struggle, in which the victor was severely wounded; his blood, sinking into the earth, caused the up-springing of the woodland lilies, still to be gathered in the glades. Like the other numerous legends of conquest over evil, this dragon-myth tells of victory through suffering, and has its own special parable that the fairest flowers in the spiritual garden spring from the self-sacrifice of the Saints. S. Martin, Bishop and Confessor, is honoured on November 11th, and the Flas Martini (*Alstroemeria*), with its handsome clusters, derives its name from this ever-popular Saint. S. Cecilia has the trumpet-shaped Wood-Sorrel, one of the *Oxalis* species, as her flower, November 22nd. Another Virgin Martyr, S. Katherine, November 25th, lends her patronage to Love-in-a-Mist, the *Nigella Damascena*, shaped like the wheel, the instrument of her martyrdom. It may be added, in concluding the ecclesiastical year, that a forgotten

devotion may perhaps be traceable in the name, Good King Henry, bestowed in old herbals upon the Wild Spinach (*Chenopodium*) sometimes to be seen in cottage gardens. The chronicler Stowe recounts that Henry VI. was venerated as Holy King Henry, and was regarded as a martyr, the popular reverence for his relics attracting many pilgrims to his tomb at Windsor, while in the early part of the sixteenth century invocations to him were to be found in some of the office-books. No country has rivalled England in the instinctive sense of the divinity that doth hedge a king, and, so far as Henry VI. is concerned, it is not without interest to record a curious corroboration of this popularly ascribed sanctity, in a tradition related to Sir Walter Scott by Lady Louisa Stuart, published in the collection of the great romancer's letters: 'Henry VI. found an asylum at Muncaster Castle when flying from the Yorkists, and remained some months inhabiting a part of the Castle still known by the name of "the King's Apartment." When going away, he lamented that his poverty allowed of no suitable gift to his kind host, Sir John de Pennington, but said he would leave them the glass out of which he commonly drank; then formally blessed it, and prayed that while the glass remained unbroken the House of Muncaster might never want a male heir. It has ever since been called the Luck of Muncaster. It is a goblet of thick Venice glass. The neighbouring peasantry have such a veneration for it, that on some day of feasting, when they assembled at the Castle, and Lord Muncaster brought it out to show them, many fell upon their knees.' The cup, it is further reported, is a shallow drinking-glass, not unlike the ancient patera in shape. In 1892 the present Lord Muncaster wrote that the cup was then in his strong-room. The veneration here recorded as attaching to an object associated with a pious and innocent royal sufferer may be out of harmony with modern realism, but is undoubtedly a survival of feelings and beliefs deeply ingrained in the national character. Looking along the Calendar of our Church, and investigating the hagiology of Cornwall and of Wales, we shall find ample testimony of this in the names of many royal Saints, canonised by acclamation and deep-rooted in popular regard. Among flower-names are a few quaint strays from times when the monk giving alms at his gateway, and the wandering friar preaching from town to

town and village to village, were familiar figures in English scenery. The Herb-Bennet (*Geum urbanum*), growing wild under English hedgerows, was held to possess medicinal qualities as to its root, while the leaves were esteemed as a pot-herb. The Patience-dock is called by Gerard 'Monk's Rhubarb'; it can hardly have been a toothsome substitute for the esculent plant of our kitchen-gardens. The *Aconitum* is 'Monk's-Hood'; the *Arum*, 'Friar's-Cowl'; the woolly-headed thistle, 'Friar's-Crown.' Other examples could, with a little pains, be multiplied; those already given may suffice to indicate the imaginative hold of the Creed of Christendom in a single department of common life. That these natural emblems fit in with the fancy of the people may be certified from the immense success which has attended their political application in the modern Primrose League. And assuredly something of poetry and of charm haunts this old-world nomenclature, a fragrance as of conserved roses lingers in these verbal relics of years when the peasant still stayed his hand from plough or sickle at the sound of 'good Master Herbert's Saints'-bell,' or followed the parish parson and the processional Cross over lanes and fields, when the paths were vocal with litanies beseeching a blessing on the fruits of the earth. Bank Holidays, Fourth of July, Fêtes of the Republic, may bring their material satisfactions; but, if there are sermons in stones, perhaps some lesson is linked with these more ancient memories which the 'struggle-for-life' epoch can ill afford to lose. 'The invisible world is ever breaking through the expressive aspect of natural things.' It was in wisdom, as well as in tender indulgence, that the Church encouraged her children to learn something of its meaning and its mystery, even from the simplest flower that blows.

M. F. CLIFTON.

*THE MAIN CHANCE.*

BY CHRISTABEL R. COLERIDGE, AUTHOR OF 'WAYNFLETE,' 'THE TENDER  
MERCIES OF THE GOOD,' 'THE PROPHET'S MANTLE,' ETC.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## OPEN EYES.

THAT conversation and all the interests involved in it vanished for the moment from Guy's mind as if it had never been. It was forgotten by Wickham as Staunton's face, with misfortune imprinted upon it, appeared in the doorway.

No instinct, no premonition of danger, had come to Guy. There had been no touch on brain or spirit, but the dismayed face and voice made the second words no surprise.

'Yes, that afternoon there had been an accident, an upset driving home with Mrs. Lennox. They had been thrown out; Mrs. Lennox was not hurt; Florella—no, she had not spoken since; but everything was being done. Cuthbert had gone there at once when the news came, had come back hoping to find Guy at home, but not finding him, had guessed he might be with Wickham. Oh! yes, any moment might bring a change; they might find the alarm over.'

Cuthbert was pale, agitated, he spoke confusedly. Guy stared at him as if only half taking in what he said.

'I had better go,' he said, taking up his hat, while Wickham put a glass into his hand.

'Take this first; you'll need it. You are driving!' to Cuthbert. Then aside, 'Is it the worst?'

'No, no,' said Cuthbert hurriedly; 'not yet, certainly.'

Cuthbert had brought the dog-cart, and Guy got in and took the reins as a matter of course. He never spoke, but drove off at full speed, and Wickham stood watching them before going in.

He came back and sat down again by his fire. There on the table lay the old lease with its endorsement. Guy had held it in his hand at the moment of Cuthbert's entrance, and had dropped it when the new-comer's face of ill-tidings had wiped everything else out of his mind. It recalled at once the late discussion, and he reviewed it slowly and all that had led to it.

'I never should have thought a woman could be so absolutely square and straight. To give me notice before she played the trump, either to rescue her friend from my clutches—for, of course, she thinks me a wolf—or to give her lover warning that I might be dangerous. She is—a gentleman! And he? He meant all he said to-day, and he'll do it. What shall I do?'

Guy's action, following so exactly on the lines of Florella's warning, seemed as if one spirit ruled them both. In the most extraordinary manner they had given him a chance, for, of course, he could take the initiative, go to Mr. Raby and say that, in the face of this old report, he wished for his own sake for a second opinion. He knew quite well what the opinion would be. There were still coal seams worth working on the Raby estate; but Ouseley and all the Fletedale district would be declared doubtful, and probably unremunerative. The Company, which was still a private matter, would probably be dissolved; Mr. Raby would have to act alone on a much smaller scale. He himself would get no shares of his own to dispose of to Max Mervyn, nor could he put Max in the way of making bargains. There would be no big sum down to set his affairs straight. On the other hand, though he would have to live down having apparently made a great mistake—for he knew that if his fellow expert did not find out that he was a knave, he must think him inexplicably a fool—still his taking the initiative now would count in his favour, and he had little fears of losing his place.

Honesty was incalculably the best policy for the future. Nevertheless, without this money he was ruined. His debt to the guardians of the defrauded children was far from being his only obligation.

'I suppose they hardly could be down on the old man after all these years and after all I have done,' he thought. 'Public opinion is against brutality, but there are plenty to be down on me, everything would look bad, I should have to give my true

name, all the story would come out, and a good deal besides ; I *shall* be done for. He'll warn Mervyn somehow. And his withdrawal will cast suspicion on everything. *How* queer it all is !'

And even in that crucial moment of his fate he cast a thought to all that he had heard, divined, or been told of Guy's history. He knew it all by this time pretty well. He did not quite know what his own share in it was. He had certainly set himself by every clever hint and with all the forces, whatever they might be, that lay behind his desires, not only to make Guy think that there were 'thick, black, level coal seams' in Fletedale, but to intensify his desire for the money of which he stood so much in need.

Was it possible that he had not only touched the keen ambition and dread of failure already in Guy's heart, but that in some strange way he had set going the strange forces that, for Guy, the worser impulse took ? This thought was so interesting that he forgot his own anxieties and the recent news in thinking it out.

Had *he* called up the Waynflete fiend once more ? 'That is,' he thought, 'as he says himself, the idea of the ancestral spook is, of course, subjective. His temperament does all that. But did I stir up the strong impulse—temptation he calls it—which, working against a disturbed conscience, produces in him this curious result ? Is my suggestion part of his fiend or his fiend-ridden ancestral spirit ? Then *she*, with her steady purpose, her clear truthfulness, comes and—defeats me ! There need be no airs from heaven or blasts from hell ! We manufacture them ourselves !' He laughed in an odd, impersonal way. 'And my thoughts—and hers—they come ; they are suggestions. Whose ?'

The word sounded in his ears in Guy's clear, quiet voice. 'He said that the first time we ever talked of these things. Ah ! there's always something you can't get "back of" ! What or who manufactured her ?'

A sudden wave of emotion softened and confused Wickham's speculations. He started up with his mind still undecided on any course of action, seized his hat, and walked off to the Vicarage to learn the last news, and to find out, if he could, how the accident had come about.

The front door was open, the maid had been answering an inquirer. Laura Lennox, with tearful eyes, was in the hall.

'Oh ! Mr. Wickham, isn't it dreadful ?' she said. 'Darling Florella !'

'Is she no better ? How is she hurt ? What does the doctor say ?' asked Wickham ; but before Laura could answer Katie darted out of a side door, laid a burning clasp on Wickham's wrist, and dragged him into the empty dining-room. She pushed Laura away, and turned the key on her ; then, turning upon Wickham, cried out, with stifled voice, 'I did it. I've killed her. But it was all your fault—your doing, really. I hate you more than I have ever loved you.'

'Good heavens, Katie ! Are you mad ? Unlock the door this moment ? What do you mean ?'

'I will not,' cried Katie tragically. 'You shall hear me now. I've killed her—my beautiful, darling Florella ; but it's your doing—yours.'

But Wickham took her hand from the key, irresistibly and by no means gently, unlocked the door, and flung it open.

'Come in, Miss Lennox,' he said aloud. 'Perhaps we shall disturb no one here if you can tell me how things are really going.'

Laura stepped over the threshold, holding her head very high. Simple, straightforward girl as she was, she was evidently not unsuspicious.

'Mother and Florella were driving home with Bobs, our new pony,' she said. 'There was a man on a bicycle, but Bobs doesn't mind bicycles a bit. Then Katie—I don't know what she was doing—jumped out from a gate in the hedge as they came round the corner of Mill Lane ; Bobs shied right round, and they were thrown out, and dear Florella fell on her head. I can't think,' concluded Laura, with the decisive cruelty of her years ; 'I can't think how Katie could be so utterly stupid.'

'I wish I had been killed myself,' sobbed Katie. 'My life doesn't matter, and hers does.'

'But what does the doctor say ?' persisted Wickham.

'I don't think he says anything much,' said Laura, 'and they will send for another to Leeds if there's no change to-morrow.'

Here some one called, and Laura flew to answer.

'You have driven me desperate,' said Katie, facing Wickham with angry eyes. 'I don't care who hears or knows. I thought it was your bicycle, and I was dying for one word



—one little word. No ; I've given you all the love I have ; I've given you——'

'Katie, are you mad ?' said Wickham indignantly. 'If any one should hear——'

'I hear,' said a new voice ; and Max Mervyn bounded into the room. 'Mr. Wickham can answer to *me* for his behaviour. What do you mean, sir, and what have you been about ?'

'I wasn't aware that it was *your* business,' said Wickham suavely, but with savage eyes.

'It's not,' said Katie. 'It's nobody's business but mine.'

'It is,' said Max. 'I've known you ever since we were both born ; and it's my place to stand up for you. If you don't answer, sir, I'll knock you down !'

'Another time,' said Wickham emphatically, 'I shall request Miss Fielding to explain the extent of our acquaintance. Now, and here, it is impossible. Mr. Mervyn will be welcome any time he wishes to call on me, though I still hardly see his claim to interfere. But perhaps Miss Fielding can make that plain to me.'

His tone stung Katie to try to sting him.

'Mr. Mervyn needn't trouble himself,' she said. 'I can take very good care of myself. I may have been a silly girl, and believed the things that were said to me ; but I'm *well* cured now. You've made it all seem my fault, and I despise you. All's over for ever !'

She stood up between the two men, her eyes blazing, her cheeks burning. Wickham, in a white heat of anger, a very evil smile on his lips, made her a little bow ; and Max, hot, puzzled, and unconvinced, looked angrily from one to the other.

A door at the end of the room opened, and Guy came slowly in, pale, preoccupied, evidently not in the least surprised to see them all there together, nor aware of the atmosphere of wrath and excitement. Embarrassment seized on Max and Katie, but Wickham, not perhaps because he was more unselfish, but because he was acuter and more finely strung than the others, suddenly felt that the violent scene resolved itself into a mere sensational *pose* before this deep and silent sorrow.

He went up to Guy and gently touched his shoulder, with a murmur, half questioning, half sympathetic. Guy looked at him.

'They want me to go home,' he said.

Then Katie's soft, if self-centred, heart gave way. She ran up to him sobbing, and seized his hand.

'Oh, Mr. Waynflete, Mr. Waynflete, it's all my fault, my dreadful fault; I frightened Bobs, and oh, my darling Florella—if she dies——'

'Hush' interposed Wickham, sharply; then to Guy, 'Yes, I think I'd go home and come back first thing in the morning. Where's Staunton?'

'I did it, I did it!' sobbed Katie, recklessly.

'I don't think she'd be angry with you,' said Guy, in an odd unrealising tone. Then he seemed to pull himself together, and said to Wickham, 'They think there'll be no change before the morning, and there's no room here, we're in the way. But I could just sit down here, couldn't I?'

'You'll be more use to-morrow, if you rest now,' was the commonplace which of course Wickham uttered, and then Cuthbert came in, agitated and upset, and said that Mrs. Lennox had made a plan, and they could stay in the house if Guy would lie down on the library sofa, and do as he was bid.

Then Wickham laid violent hands on Max, and saying, 'We must clear out,' pulled him out of the room and out of the house, without time for another word or look at Katie, who rushed away, more from nervous terror at Guy's white impassive face, than from any sense of what a strange part she had been playing.

Then Guy submitted to his friend's care. He went into the library, ate and drank a little of the food brought for him, then lay down on the sofa and remained entirely quiet and still. Mrs. Lennox, who had come to them and enforced the food and spoken a few kind words, withdrew; Cuthbert sat in an arm-chair by the fire, and read the *Church Times*, which was near at hand. He knew little and cared less about the subjects treated in it, but he read it with the strange surface attention of moments of strain from end to end. Long after, he surprised himself and others by odd pieces of knowledge on ecclesiastical vestments and new methods of religious instruction.

Suddenly, in the small hours of the morning, Guy spoke in low, even tones, as if he were thinking aloud.

'She knew long before I did that keeping Waynflete was not the gist of the matter.'

'How?' said Cuthbert, rather startled, but glad to find that Guy could speak or think at all.

Guy changed his position, and spoke with a sort of indifference as if he were talking of some one else. Whether he did so to divert his mind or because the earlier brain impressions of the day were asserting themselves through the late stupefying shock, Cuthbert could not tell.

'When I first felt the *Double* return,' he said, 'what you would call a mental impression, but what appears to me like an alien within me, I blindly resisted his suggestions. Constantly he suggested, well—I'll say *it*—it suggested the misery of failure, of going under, of giving up the place, caving in, in fact, as Aunt Margaret thought I should. You know, it's quite on the cards that I may come to an entire smash. Don't mention it, but it's possible, Mills and all!'

'That's only the idea of your other fellow,' said Cuthbert, who knew the confession would never have been made at another moment.

'Oh no, it's not,' said Guy; 'it's quite true, as I could show you. But the degradation of failure was pressed upon me, and all the ways in which I could escape from the dread of it. Drink, any sort of excitement—you don't know how near a shave it has been. *You* were a safeguard, but I had to keep *her* away.'

'Many of us have felt that sort of thing,' said Cuthbert.

'Yes, but I saw the suggestion being made. Not that it was harder for me to resist. I've been helping some one else to fight it out, so I knew I'd no special call to cry out.'

'My dear boy, you never would take to drink. That's all nerves,' said Cuthbert.

'Perhaps,' said Guy quietly. 'Well, I had to hold on and to do the impossible. Then came a hope. Wickham's coal in Flete Dale. It seemed then as if life depended on it.'

He spoke much as if recalling the hopes and fears of another state of existence.

'That'll prove successful, I hope,' said Cuthbert.

'No. Don't you know it's a mistake? I knew Wickham was trying to suggest it to me, to make me believe it against my convictions, but I didn't see that He—that It—was enforcing it. Not till she came. She showed me, though she herself did not know, of course, anything about the coal company. Well, to-day at Waynflete, I found the old report on the coal seams dead against Wickham's, and I very nearly threw it in the fire, although my convictions went with

it. You see I wanted the money for my shares so much. You haven't an idea how easy it is to be a scoundrel.'

'Well?' said Cuthbert.

Guy sat upright. His eyes shone in the dimly lighted room. 'I felt all the powers of good and evil,' he said, 'but as she said, the right was quite simple. Waynflete, even the old business, must go before I helped to run a bubble company. But I nearly did, I nearly—took advantage of that honest lad, of my old neighbours. You know it doesn't seem like fraud at the moment. However, I got over it, and then I knew something else. I must make Wickham give up the idea too. I had been too much like him to denounce him. I was talking it over with him when——'

'Well, but,' said Cuthbert, hastily recalling him from that terrible 'when,' 'I don't believe there was the least chance of your giving in, but it all sounds perfectly natural and normal as you tell it.'

'Of course,' said Guy, 'if it happened it was according to nature. But it seems to me that I have felt the natural, that is, the spiritual forces at work.'

"And the "other fellow"? said Cuthbert. 'Is he still with you?'

'Oh,' said Guy, 'the sense of realisation varies, but he won't be on the wrong side any longer now.'

'But you don't mean to say that you mean to sell Waynflete—that the business may come to smash——'

'I shall sell Waynflete—I shall save the business if I can. But you see if she dies, this world won't matter much. Not that we could be parted, so long as we exist. She might come—Hark! What's that?'

Both men sprang to their feet as Mrs. Lennox came softly into the room.

'She has opened her eyes and moved,' she said. 'You must not *think* of coming near her, but it is more hopeful. I think she will soon come to herself.'

She went away again almost before they could answer. Guy seized on Cuthbert with shaking hands.

'Oh, if she lives,' he cried, 'if I should hear her, touch her again——'

A great sob choked him, he hid his face. Hope was more than he could bear.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## MAX TO THE RESCUE.

On the next morning matters fell into a sort of routine. A trained nurse arrived, and no one else but Mrs. Lennox was allowed to see Florella ; but the doctor gave cautious hopes, and Guy, since the world could not stand still, went off to the mill to do his work there as best he could. Staunton made himself useful with letters and telegrams, and tried to fill up the weary day, sitting alone at the Mill House and seeing over and over again in his mind's eye Florella, brave, sweet, and welcome, as when she had come in upon him so short a time before.

Mrs. Lennox had hardly seized a moment to sit down and think of the many things to be done and the many people to be considered, when Laura came in to her, and shutting the door discreetly, said that she did not wish Lily to know, but there was something she ought to tell mother about Katie.

'Katie ? My dear, I have never thought of poor Katie ! Does she know that she frightened Bobs ? I don't wonder if she is unhappy.'

'That's just it, mother,' said Laura. 'I think Katie thought the man on the bicycle was Mr. Wickham—and, mother—I'm sure she's in love with him, she's been so queer.'

'What ?' said Mrs. Lennox, arrested in the midst of her anxieties by this confidence from her fourteen-year-old daughter.

'Well, mother,' said Laura, rather hot, 'it came into my head the other day. I saw her whisper to him when he brought father the advertisement of the second-hand bagatelle board for the club. Lily and I thought it was Mr. Mervyn because they were old friends, and she talked about him ; but it's not—and mother—I'm sure she went out to meet him, and jumped out on the pony.'

'Are you sure, Laura ?' said Mrs. Lennox, as quietly as she could.

'Yes, mother. She can't talk about him without blushing. And one thing made me quite sure ; she got that great piece of red *jasper* out of the mineral drawer and set it up on the mantelpiece in her room. That's his name, you know, mother—'

Jasper. That showed it, for she doesn't care for specimens. But I thought you wouldn't like Lily to know. And last night—she locked herself in with him——'

'Laura !'

'Oh, he unlocked the door and called me. But after that I thought I ought to tell you.'

'That was very sensible of you. But I don't think I can look into it now. Say nothing at all to any one. Perhaps you're mistaken.'

'Oh no, mother ! Think of the jasper. It's just what people always do. I hope I shall never be so ridiculous !'

Mrs. Lennox hoped not. She had hardly sent the discreet Laura away to the schoolroom, feeling that it was a particularly inconvenient moment to have to look into Katie's conduct, when Mr. Mervyn was announced.

Why had the maid let him in ?

He soon enlightened her.

'Mrs. Lennox, I hope I'm not in the way. I've taken a moment out of business hours because I've made up my mind you ought to know what is going on. I feel responsible as an old friend for Miss Fielding—merely as an old friend—but last night brought it to a climax.'

'Please explain what you mean,' said Mrs. Lennox, and Max plunged into an account of his suspicions, his quarrels with Katie, his appeal to Miss Vyner, 'who couldn't see to it now,' ending with, 'But, Mrs. Lennox, I hope you'll not be too hard on her. She's very young and—and soft-hearted—and I've known her since we were—that high—and my interest is brotherly, I assure you. But Mr. Greenway invited me to his place to spend Christmas, and before I went—I thought——'

Here Max floundered and hesitated, much of his usual self-assertion gone, and with his brotherly countenance exceedingly hot and flustered.

Mr. Lennox would not give Katie away. She said that she regarded Miss Fielding as part of her family, and was obliged to Mr. Mervyn for his kind warning ; but that it was of course not impossible that Mr. Wickham might wish to pay Katie attention, there was nothing, so far as she knew, in his position or prospects to make such an idea unsuitable.

Max's face fell considerably. 'I don't believe he's on the square about it,' he said.

'Well, Mr. Mervyn, you were quite right to come to me. Although we came into our old neighbourhood after you left it, I have always known your name, and don't regard you as a stranger. Leave the matter in my hands. Hadn't you better get back to the mill? I am sure Mr. Waynflete must want all the help you can give him.'

'He looks awfully bad,' said Max. 'I'm sure I'd look after the whole concern for him if he liked with pleasure! I'll cycle back in a twinkling.'

'I want a word with you,' said Guy, at the day's end. He was so quiet that Max had got over his first feeling of uncomfortable awe and wonder how to behave to him.

'I want to tell you,' Guy said, 'that I want to reconsider my undertaking to sell the Fletehead coal shares. My affairs—I speak in confidence—will require sacrifices on a larger scale. If you will drop the transaction without more words, I should be glad, if not, of course by and by I will give you more particulars. Indeed, you will get those finally in any case. Will you allow the transfer to stand over for a week or two? I don't think you will regret a delay.'

'Of course,' said Max, looking shrewd and businesslike, 'I don't want to get the shares under market value, but as I was the first in the field——'

Guy looked at him. 'I am quite willing to give you the first offer of them,' he said drily, with what might have been a laugh at another moment. Max felt rather small.

'In that case,' he said, 'of course I wouldn't hold another gentleman to a bargain.'

'I am putting confidence in you,' said Guy. 'I am not able just now to think out the next step clearly.'

'All right,' said Max, puzzled, and rather glad to get away from him.

The first person he met as he went up to his lodgings was Wickham himself, looking, as Max thought, 'nearly as queer as Waynflete.' Max did not in the least know how to meet him, but the other, coolly ignoring the scene at the Vicarage, asked what his last news from thence was, and if he should find any one at home at the Mill House.

Then Max, who prided himself on keeping his business relations with Wickham distinct from his other suspicions, and who supposed that Guy's injunctions to secrecy could not include the man who had been the agent in the whole

transaction, revealed that Waynflete wanted to be off his bargain.

'It isn't quite like him to want to make a better one,' he concluded.

'You always had remarkable insight into character,' said Wickham, 'and I quite agree with you that it's not.'

'Then what do you think he's up to?' said Max. 'Things seemed so satisfactory.'

'Things are not always what they seem,' said Wickham.

'Why, there ain't any doubt about the coal, is there?' said Max, jumping to a much quicker conclusion than Wickham had expected. 'By Jove! That would be a facer.'

'It would for me,' said Wickham, coolly. 'You can think about it,' he concluded, as he walked on, his cool tone making Max doubt his own sudden suspicion.

But this grew as he thought the matter over. His dislike, distrust, and jealousy of Wickham began to rise up and flood over the artificial barrier he had raised against it. It was so probable that somehow this insinuating fellow was a scoundrel.

'I'll go slap over to old Raby and consult him,' he said to himself, slapping his knee. 'In business matters you can't be too prompt. I'll get a trap at the "Lion." Those moor roads ain't safe after dark for a bike.'

Wickham meanwhile went slowly on to the Mill House, and asking if he could see Mr. Waynflete, was shown into the study where Guy sat by his writing-table searching through an open drawer. He looked very tired and pale, but as he turned his eyes on his visitor they had the same curious outgoing look which had struck Wickham before. There was the same entire absence of self-defence or self-assertion.

'I have found James Fisher's actual report,' he said, without any preface, holding out a paper.

Wickham took it and read it quickly through.

'I don't consider it conclusive,' he said. 'I'm prepared to stand by my opinion. If you secede you'll smash up the whole thing, and there is money in it. Hold your peace now, and by and by, if things don't turn out as you expect on your property, refund the money for your shares. It's too late now for you to draw back without doing more harm than good.'

'I have settled about the shares with Mervyn,' said Guy,



'and if I put the whole of the Waynflete property on the market, as I shall, no one will think it strange that I do not wish to dispose of Fletehead separately. I am quite sure that Mr. Raby will see that arranged for me. I see my own way clear. It is not that I don't consider shares in the company of any value, probably those you have sold to Mervyn are not worthless. But I have no right to any, as I cannot offer an equivalent. But I want you to take this report of Fisher's to Mr. Raby, ask for another opinion, and start fair. You see the value of the mining rights on my property must come into question sooner or later. I really don't think you can do better for yourself, besides that it is a most unexpected chance of repentance for both of us.'

'Look here,' said Wickham, 'if I hadn't tried to work on you, would you have distrusted me?'

'Perhaps not,' said Guy, 'but I never really agreed with you. I thought old Mat Palmer was right. Prejudice, possibly.' He paused a moment and then began again. 'Really,' he said, 'it does not profit at all to gain the whole world and lose one's own soul, one's own self. I don't think it's worth while to lose the right to feel one's self an honest man, a man of honour. I am sure it is not, here on this plane if you can't realise another. I should not have cared of myself about your soul or your honour, but Florella showed me that defeating the consequences of evil is not the same thing as doing away with it. That, in fact, is what is meant by overcoming evil with good. That is what a new heart is. That is the work of Christ, His Spirit.'

The absolute wholeness and sincerity of Guy's face and manner, the absence of any shade of self-consciousness about him, gave these obvious words a force as if they were indeed spiritual utterances.

Wickham's guard gave way. The Force brought to bear upon him was stronger than he.

'Well,' he said, 'you have done your best to allow honesty to be the best policy. What do you want me exactly to do?'

'I want you to take this old report to Mr. Raby and ask him to have another report made on the whole business. Then you have the matter in your own hands. If your story comes out, it is to your personal credit, and though, from what you say, I suppose your record isn't exactly clear, you're young

and your work is first-class. If you are in a hole there's no use in shirking the fact. You won't go under.'

'Well,' said Wickham, 'I'll risk it. I'll go to Kirkton. I know you've paid a good price for the right to say all this to me.'

'That doesn't seem to matter much just now,' said Guy. 'Things get into focus.'

He smiled a little, and Wickham gripped his hand in silence, then went straight to the station and took a train just starting for Rilston.

'Promptness is everything,' he thought. He was amazed at himself, for he knew that it was not merely that after weighing all chances in the balance he had decided to take the boldest line. Guy had dominated him, changed him, made him feel new feelings and act upon new motives.

'In fact he "converted" me for the time being,' he thought. 'That's the way it's done, that's what *she* has all along desired. Of course there's an alternative of action.' He reflected that he might produce the old report, and yet so speak of Guy's scruples as to put them out of court. A hint that Waynflete thought that he, Wickham, had tried to hypnotise him, might be so given, with such an intonation as to invalidate all the rest. It would be quite easy to represent Guy as being under a delusion.

'It would,' thought Wickham, 'then I *should* be a scoundrel!'

The Kirkton party were all in dismay at the news of Florella's accident. The acting and all the gaieties belonging to it could not even be discussed while there was any doubt as to how things might go with her, and when Max arrived the ladies had so much to say to him that he had only just got into Mr. Raby's library for the business interview on which he had set his heart, when the last person whom he expected to see was shown in upon them.

'Hallo! Wickham!' he said blankly.

'Yes,' said Wickham, in a voice which told nothing. 'Something important has made me trouble Mr. Raby. It may be as well that you, too, should hear what it is. Mr. Waynflete has discovered among some old papers this report, made by a Dewsbury engineer on the Waynflete coal in 1859. He does not remember to have heard it mentioned, but as it does not agree with my recent one, he wished it to be placed

in your hands at once, and I agree with him in thinking that an independent report should be made.'

'Then that's what Waynflete was thinking of!' exclaimed Max, as Mr. Raby took the paper. 'That's what I came here about, sir, to say that he wanted to be off his bargain.'

'Fisher, of Dewsbury,' said Mr. Raby; 'very well-known old firm of mining engineers. Old Tom Palmer always knew what he was about. Still, we always knew that there had been adverse opinions. Very proper of Mr. Guy to produce this, and of you to wish for another opinion. But I don't know that it is necessary.'

'I should think the Committee would consider it satisfactory,' said Wickham in strictly impartial tones.

Max sat looking at him with steady, wide-open eyes, his strong dislike to him, his just suspicions, gaining rapid ground.

Wickham had started the notion of the coal company, had worked him up about it, had set him on getting Guy Waynflete's shares, had offered him the ones assigned to himself, had wanted these transactions to be secret and quick. No one knew anything about the character or the circumstances of this clever adventurer except that he was more attractive than an honest man ought to be.

'It looks fishy,' Max thought to himself, 'and the fishiest part of it to me is the bringing the document over here himself, and getting the first say about it.'

'I shall certainly vote for an entirely independent opinion, for a fresh report being made by another expert,' he said emphatically. 'And of course, Mr. Wickham, the bargain I made with you about your shares must stand over. I think Mr. Guy might have told me why he wanted to be off his, but I suppose just now he isn't exactly up to business.'

'I came here,' said Wickham, 'to ensure that all previous arrangements *should* stand over.'

Old Mr. Raby looked at Max. He was not accustomed to loud and equal tones from a young nobody, as he regarded Max, nor to have decisions made for him.

'Mr. Wickham's got to justify his opinion or to get it justified,' said Max, 'and being quite an impartial person, I feel that it's my place to demand it.'

Mr. Raby stood up. 'I think I heard the dressing-gong,' he said. 'Mr. Waynflete will no doubt entrust this document to me. I will see him to-morrow. I am greatly obliged to

him and to you, Mr. Wickham, for your prompt action. Mr. Mervyn need not be afraid that the matter will be neglected.'

'That's all I want,' said Max. He did not feel himself snubbed, but thought that the old gentleman felt awkwardly placed. Wickham was his own man.

'I'm going to take a parcel in my trap to the Vicarage for the ladies,' he said, departing.

'I feel small doubt of the result of the new report,' said Mr. Raby to Wickham, 'though it is of course necessary to make one. You took quite the right step in coming to me.'

Was not this the 'unexpected opportunity for repentance' of which Guy had spoken? Wickham was not equal to taking advantage of it, and held his tongue, but the old gentleman's slowness to harbour suspicion, and courteous assurance of his confidence, made him feel more ashamed of himself than he had had leisure to be in the bewilderment of Guy's appeal to him.

*(To be continued.)*

---

## FROM MY ATTIC WINDOW.

---

**The weak at the wall.** WHAT a number of problems a woman—an every-day common or garden mistress of a household—has to solve in the course of her daily round and common tasks! And so many of them never get solved at all; they only get shelved. To take one example which I expect comes to others as well as to me—that of helping the hopeless, shiftless, and helpless poor. To me it is an almost daily battle between what we call the heart, and what in my conceit I call my reason. There is that particular woman who is in my mind now, and who probably will be on my doorstep before long. She is twenty-five now, and is getting an old woman. She has buried five children, all babies, and at present there is another underfed, puny morsel struggling to get a footing in this life. I only fervently hope it will find that it is no use and give up the attempt early. I knew the girl well before she went off one day and married a boy also in his teens. They were both very drunk before the wedding day was done, and celebrated the occasion with a black eye and a broken arm. The story of the wedding day has been repeated many times since, only varied by desertions for two or three months together on the boy's side. These were times of comparative peace, except that there was always a baby coming or going. When he works at all it is at being a 'half-boy' on a fishing boat. A half-boy means that when the boat catches anything and the proceeds are divided in different proportions he gets half a boy's share. This has amounted to three shillings in rare weeks. The average is nearer three halfpence. Now what is a woman, who is a mother herself, to do when a white-faced girl, almost a skeleton, comes up to beg for food, bringing her fortnight-old baby with her? 'I'm dreadful whisht, ma'am, I hardly know how to stand. (Mirabile!) I've had nothing to day, and only a bit of tea the person that

lives in our house give me yesterday.' I know that in giving her food and clothes for the children (which reach the pawnshop within a week to pay the rent—half a crown a week for a filthy hole looking into a filthier court) I am only helping the unfit to live, only arranging for another generation of shiftless, helpless creatures to crowd our overcrowded country. The man will not work; she cannot. The workhouse is the only possibility, and they would rather starve before my eyes, as they have done these many years, sooner than go there. What is one to do?

This story is only just a type of the stories that come before us all and make one class of our daily problems. They are problems which need for their solving philosophy and political economy and ethics and history and a knowledge of charity organisation, to say nothing of a profound acquaintance with the deceptions possible to human nature and a far sight into the great beyond. And yet men were wont to ask, 'What do women want education for? Their work is to be wives and mothers and housekeepers.' The work which needs more education than any other, my dear sir—an education which should begin a hundred years before we are born.

\* \* \* \* \*

**A Union of Workers.** Isolation is loss of force to the Christian worker, or to any one aiming at the good of his fellows. Sympathy feeds enthusiasm, communion of spirits makes for wisdom. Enthusiasm—always provided it has the backbone of principle—added to wisdom is the mainspring of all good work. That is my general enunciation. My particular enunciation refers to the National Union of Women Workers, for the object for which it exists is founded on that general enunciation. And it is a union whose methods are so well adapted to attain the ends it aims at that an examination of them is an education.

Its work, so the articles of its faith set forth, is 'to focus and redistribute information likely to be of service to women workers and to promote the civil, social, moral, and religious welfare of women.' In order to accomplish this it has a central office in London and a secretary who can give information as to various methods of philanthropy, schemes of work, addresses of Homes, workers, and many other things. It is certainly obvious that in this country, where so many excellent people are trying to do their best to make more

excellent people and to do a variety of kind and helpful things, there must be a good deal of waste of energy from overlapping, a great deal of waste of time from not knowing where to go for the information wanted at the moment. Hence this part of the work of the Women Workers' Union.

But there is another part, and, as far as my personal experience goes, a more interesting part. I am thinking of the Conferences which every year make a gathering-place for workers of all kinds. Papers are read by experts on various subjects, and these are helpful. Discussions follow, and these are sometimes interesting, sometimes wearisome. But whatever else there is not, there is always the opportunity of meeting other women who in various ways are doing the work you yourself are trying to accomplish. And how this meeting of old friends and new acquaintances stimulates and revives the isolated worker, and how workers in the same town learn to know each other better in these autumn days of the Conference week! George Eliot knew what was in the heart of woman—and man too, only he would not confess it even to the looking-glass—when she wrote, 'It is hard to believe for long together that anything is worth while unless there is some voice near to say so, some hand to hold in yours, some heart beating in unison with your own.'

Facts about the Union? There are plenty. Are they not contained in the Handbook of the National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland, whose offices are at 59, Berners Street, Oxford Street, London, W.? The Conferences have met heretofore in Birmingham and Leeds, Manchester and Bristol, Glasgow and Nottingham, and other places, with various presidents—the Duchess of Bedford and Mrs. Creighton, the Hon. Mrs. Talbot, and this year, when the Conference meets at Norwich, Mrs. Alfred Booth. I will guarantee on my personal responsibility that any one who attends it will come away the wiser and the happier—unless of course she is hopelessly impervious to new suggestions or suffering from severe liver complaint.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Travellers.** Nothing brings out the strength and weakness and the particular points of any character more than travel. In fact, choosing a travelling companion is as important and terrible a dilemma as selecting a husband or a typewriter or even a bicycle. The end of a hot day's journey,

when the baggage has gone astray and everything that could go wrong has gone wrong, is the time to find out what a man or a woman is made of. And of course the longer the journey and the more uncivilised the country, the greater the test. I would not go so far as to insist that all would-be husbands and wives should join a caravan crossing the Sahara, or even make a tour from Cairo to Cape Town *via* the great lakes before finally setting out on the matrimonial path. Because only about one couple in ten thousand would ever take the risks after such an insight into each other's characters. And perhaps, after all, the other nine thousand nine hundred and ninety nine couples are quite moderately happy as they are in the married state, and never suspect what language the other would be capable of in a malarial swamp.

But this is more or less by the way, the end of which way is to point out how some people come back from their journeyings—be they to the next town or across two hemispheres—no wiser, no broader minded, no more intelligent than they went. While others—Miss Kingsley, to wit—come back experts on some conditions of life or death in that land. What travellers bring back depends, of course, on what they take with them. If you take eyes and ears, a faculty for putting one and two together and discovering that they amount to three, the chances are you will come back very much wiser than you went. Miss Kingsley has come back from her journey alone across Africa an expert. Her stern common sense and her capacity for being able to say just what she wants to say in terms impossible to misunderstand has made her now a person of recognised weight. I say 'now,' because when she first came home all we knew of her was that she could, and did, tell the story of her adventures—which were exciting enough without any elaboration—with a piquant, witty clearness which made them at once valuable and amusing. Now she has been instructing British nurses on health and sickness in that most deadly of all climates on the West African coast. The average death rate for whites is about 300 per thousand in good years. In bad years the average is not recorded.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Nursing and Nurses.** The result of Miss Kingsley's observation and experience goes to show that what is wanted on the West Coast of Africa is nurses and always more nurses. There are doctors a few, and their great need is nurses.



Malarial fevers need nursing more than doctoring. There are some floating hospitals; there must be more. But whether there are hospitals or not, if the white man is to live through his troubles in West Africa, he must be carefully nursed. I have noticed this point and emphasised it, because there is a moral for women who work or who want to work in it. This call from our West African colonies is not an isolated call. The outlying lands of Canada, which are barely yet in the fringe of civilisation, say the same. The wide new lands to the north of the Cape—Rhodesia and the mining settlements—all cry the same. And it is a cry worth listening to, for it means that even out of England the trained nurse is recognised as a necessity—that as civilisation extends, as it is extending every day, so will the need for trained nurses extend. Private enterprise or Government subsidies may send them, but they will always be wanted. There lies the future for nurses who are not wanted or are underpaid at home. Women with strong physique and nerve, perfect health and unlimited common sense, who have specialised on the diseases of the country they choose, and have learnt how to make the best of its resources for sick cooking, always have a career. They know that they will be needed where they go, and that, despite the risks to health and the sacrifice of leaving their own land, they will be living a life eminently worth the living.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Tempera.** It is only an academic question of course, but it is interesting to inquire whether in the course of the past century our tempers have grown worse or better. And I find the answer rather comforting to my feelings. In the years that were earlier there ought to have been far less friction, far less reason for that haste which breeds outbursts of temper. But nevertheless we find in the novels of the day ominous dashes which suggest that my lord's language was on the very slightest of provocations unfit for the innocent readers of books. My lady, too, had frequent attacks of tantrums, when all the household knew it was wisest to keep out of the way. Sons were 'cut off with a shilling' after a very hasty disagreement with the ruling powers. Mistresses flogged their servants for offences which we should only remark were annoying. Children were shut up in dark rooms and given whippings for trifles which by us would be explained away as the effects of indigestion and treated with homeopathic medicines. And yet

they had not our rush and push and complexity of life as an excuse. It looks as though we were better than our fathers, or rather our grandfathers. But there is also another point which may prevent our too great elation; they had not our outlets for their stormy feelings. They were shut up in one house, to one neighbourhood; they met very few who were not in their immediate circle. And every one knows that for calming troubled spirits there is nothing like change of scene and thought. If something happens which jars us out of self-control we give vent to our feelings by a pet phrase which we keep for such occasions—it need not necessarily be ‘Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus,’ though that is highly recommended for the purpose—and go off for an hour on a cycle. Or we take the train and see our dearest friend, or even in a very bad case go to a bazaar or a committee meeting, or its equivalent. We come back to the centre of irritation and find it surprisingly calm. But though we have arrived at the conclusion that we are outwardly less tempestuous than our forebears, we must not hug to ourselves the choice belief that we are necessarily better. We wheel it off—they swore it off. It is of course a pleasanter method to our next of kin, but otherwise the difference is not so great.

ANNIE GROSER HURD.

## The China Cupboard.

ARRANGED BY CHELSEA CHINA.

(For the regulations of all 'Monthly Packet' Competitions, see p. 240.)

### FIRST SHELF.

The keen eyes that look from our Attic Window will certainly have noticed all those doings of the London season which concern our readers ; but Chelsea China may record a few of her own impressions.

London seems to her to get fuller and busier, more flowery and more gaily painted every year. Sky blue and pea green front doors, scarlet striped blinds, brightly coloured pottery, and flowers of every tint, to say nothing of hats and bonnets that more than rival the hues of nature ; its omnibuses—red, white, green, blue, and gold—under a sun which *does* occasionally shine, in spite of conventional opinion to the contrary, make the wide districts which are affected by the 'season' anything but gloomy now, whatever may have been the case in former days. People say and write that English people don't care about London, don't love it as Frenchmen do Paris. Ah, but Londoners do. The personality of London is so tremendous that it cannot be talked about ; it is with difficulty that we think about it or realise it ; but we are enormously affected by it, we feel its vast, many-sided power.

The 'atmosphere' of London (we do not mean the smoke) is unlike anything else in the world, and contains plenty of mental ozone for the visitor.

Birds of a feather flock together, and the Women Writers came to their dinner at the 'Criterion' on June 20th in the very gayest and prettiest feathers they possessed—and very pretty indeed some of them were. Big stars, little stars, and farthing candles—all seemed to enjoy themselves together, and each, we think, determined to shine her brightest through the coming year.

Then what may be called the philanthropic gaieties of May and June in London are far from being the dull and dreary functions sometimes supposed. Old friends meet, new friends are made, special interests freshened up and new lines of work started, to be carried out at home in the country. Does any merry young girl who is afraid of being dragged in to 'do parish,' against her will, think a G. F. S. Branch Secretaries' Conference, for instance, likely to be solemn and goody ? Let her peep in and listen to the talking and chattering and laughing over luncheon and tea—the pleasant greetings and the eager questions, and she will find that having something to talk about does not deprive conversation of its charm.

Let us strike for a moment a graver note. Among the more technical papers read on this occasion, on which this is not the place to comment, came Mrs. Benson's on 'Common Sense, Judgment, and Wisdom.' Much

too uncommon is common sense as she defined it. How few of us have a sense of the true proportion of things, have humour enough to laugh at our own mistakes, and *never* lose sight of the other side! It is so hard to wear our colours nicely made up in a smart and conspicuous bow, to fight for them and be true to them through and through; and yet to know without a grudge that ribbons of other colours are equally valuable—yes, and to believe that beyond the red and violet at the two ends of the spectrum there are other hues which our eyes are not clear enough to see, which have their great purpose in the Universal Wisdom to which we must all look up for guidance?

To believe that other ways of work are as good as our own, and yet to work at our own with all our hearts—how hard that is—and how needful!

---

#### VARIETY SUBJECT FOR JUNE.

'The struggle and not the attainment measures the character.' Apply this saying to the life of some 'hero of failure' in history or fiction.

---

This subject has brought out some very interesting papers. Hamlet, Strafford, Marcus Brutus, John Nicholson, William Wallace, Sir John Franklyn are the heroes chosen, and *H. M. Oldfield* sends a paper on the Charge of the Light Brigade which illustrates the subject well, though it hardly answers the question set. Many ideas are suggested. Can we, for instance, call martyrs 'heroes of failure' if their cause succeeds? They give their lives, certainly, but as a condition of *success*. The difficulty and the interest of the application is when an heroic struggle is made in a cause which does not triumph and perhaps ought not to do so, as in the case of Marcus Brutus; or when, as in the case of Hamlet, a man is placed in a position with which he cannot grapple; when the square man is in the round hole; when the sow's ear is trying to make itself into a silk purse, or *vice-versâ*, which is even more difficult. That, alas! is usually the cause of the failures of actual life, when some want of judgment in the aim, or some want of power in the pursuit makes success impossible, but when, indeed, many a blow and biting sculpture carves out the character to the end.

It is often, in a complex world, necessary to aim at an object which nature did not fit us to attain; but there is no kind of merit in doing so if we can help it. There are fools as well as heroes of failure, who would do much better for themselves and the world if they took another line and achieved a little modest success. Because, other things being equal, if an aim is good, it is better to succeed in it than to fail.

The aims of our chosen heroes, however, are mostly impersonal. *Stanzel's* 'Hamlet' is the best written and shows the most original thought. He therefore takes the prize. *Loyault's* paper on Marcus Brutus gives his practical mistakes very well, and does justice to his noble character; but surely the real reason of the failure of the conspirators was that they forgot that the old order was changing and giving place to the new. They could not 'stand up against the spirit of Cæsar,' the great development of ancient Rome into the Empire which, for good or evil, was to rule the world. They dragged the wheels too late. And this, if a digression may be allowed, is the answer to the critics who say that the climax of Shakespeare's play is in the middle. Not so; Shakespeare knew better. It is when all Cæsar's opponents fall before his Spirit.

'Wallace Wight,' on the other hand, was engaged, we suppose, in deferring the union of England and Scotland until the times were ripe for it. In our civil wars one must of course feel that there were two principles

in dispute, and that it was as fully in the order of things to keep the one alive as to develop the other. *Peter's* view of *Strafford* coincides on the whole with that of *Browning's* play, and though *Chelsea China* personally thinks that he did not keep his own honour stainless in 'defending the honour of a faithless king,' and that he was somewhat inexcusably indifferent to the sufferings of a great nation, he was an undoubtedly heroic figure, and she gives *Peter's* paper. *Miranda* and *Doronicum* give us two brave men in *John Franklyn* and *John Nicholson*.

# HAMLET.

There is a well-known story of a man who was asked what he had done during the Reign of Terror, and replied 'J'ai vécu.'

To keep alive is of itself an achievement in such a moral tempest as the play of 'Hamlet.'

One after another the characters go down, and they sink almost without a struggle. *Horatio* escapes with his life; does *Hamlet*? Or is he, as some critics do not hesitate to call him, 'a ship-wrecked soul'?

On his own view there is no doubt about it.

*Hamlet* is always inclined to measure success by 'what's done,' to adore his opposites, men of action like the late *King* and young *Fortinbras*; and, because in his own case visible achievements are few, he leaves 'what's resisted' out of the question, and is his own most merciless judge.

He has to struggle for his life and his reason against a changing, bewildering sea of troubles, and the very fact of the odds being so desperate prevents his seeing that he is making any fight at all. Duty to him is essentially the stern law-giver; when he falls short he always knows it, but he never sees the smile upon her face if he obeys.

There is a significant change in the play which I think bears this out. In the first version of the great soliloquy *Hamlet's* deterrent from suicide is the hope that heaven will make up for earth; in the play, as we have it, it is the fear of something after death. He acts under the stimulus of fear and his own fierce scorn of evil; they are not such strong incentives as hope, and he despises and despairs of himself.

Is his judgment right or wrong? One action stands before him from the beginning of the play, sometimes appearing a paramount duty, sometimes a deadly sin. He hesitates and meditates over it till the very end, and then performs it by a sudden impulse under circumstances which quite change its character. That, at best, is very dubious success.

Another duty suddenly starts up before him after the play scene, and there follows an interview in which surely character tells. If the *Queen* goes on sinning after she has seen what her conduct looks like under the white blaze of *Hamlet's* indignation, she sins with her eyes open. But in the very midst of his passionate entreaty the conviction rushes over him that it is all to no purpose. What is the use of trying to write on water? He puts that down as another failure, and so it is, but the question remains, whose fault is it?

All this time the real story is being acted out on that inner stage, where thoughts are characters, and here I think one thing is clear.

The *Hamlet* of the first scenes is not altogether the *Hamlet* of the last. Love and kinship have failed him, he tries friendship and it stands firm.

Henceforward there is something between him and hopeless cynicism. That is not all; he has made his way, when the play closes, to something which is not yet resignation, still less peace, but at least a conviction that there is a Power overhead irresistible and perhaps tender, and that is faith enough to keep despair at bay.

And at the last *Shakspeare* interposes to shield the fame of his sorely-tried, enigmatical hero. After all *Hamlet* is not to leave only 'a wounded

name' behind him. The Church which cast out Ophelia has no commendation for her lover's parting soul, but surely Horatio is right in his trust that the angels will receive it. Then another voice joins in with his. Fortinbras apparently knew Hamlet very little, and if he had known him better would probably have understood him less; but may we not believe that Shakspeare makes use of the man who succeeded to express his own judgment that his hero of failure was, notwithstanding all, 'most loyal'?—STANZEZL.

## STRAFFORD.

Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, statesman and soldier, may well be termed a hero of failure. 'Thorough' was the watchword, the great principle of his life, as of his policy, yet success never crowned his efforts. His standard was too high for frail human nature to attain, and the failure was the more bitter when wrought by the king.

To serve his royal master while life lasted, to sustain his kingly honour unblemished, was Strafford's ambition; to spend himself and all that he had in the work, and to be cast aside like a broken tool when the need was passed, this he held to be the noblest lot of a true and faithful subject.

Worn by disease and the hardships of a life of unremitting toil, broken by the faithlessness of those on whose faith he would, even after bitter experience, have pledged his knightly honour, the great statesman never was more noble than in the last struggle.

Impeached by men who had once been proud to call him friend, Strafford stood hour after hour during many weary days, pleading his cause with the most convincing eloquence. It was no question of his own life or death, for then the unequal battle had never been fought. But far larger was the stake at issue—to save from an ineffaceable stain the honour that he prized above all else, the honour of his faithless king. Charles had given his word that Strafford should be safe in life and estate, would he but come to London. Too well must the veteran have known the powerlessness of that royal word and will against but the little finger of the queen, or the councils of those who stood beside him at the moment. But Strafford came, and we may believe that his unfaltering honour would have infinitely preferred no safe-conduct to one that must be broken. What matter if the road to London proved the road to the death he had so often faced? *le roi le veut*. The king's word was given, and the king was powerless to redeem it; there remained, therefore, one last service for the servant to render to his lord, one more gift to add to the heap poured so freely, so willingly at the feet that too often spurned the costly treasures. Strafford laid his life in the king's hands, a last tribute to the honour he had so zealously guarded.

'The highest sovereign splendour now  
Which fades not for the crown of Fate,  
We seek not in the crowned brow  
Nor in the throne's empurpled state.  
A pride more bold  
Than sceptres hold

Be shown upon that fatal hill, where the black scaffold awes us still.'

Who can estimate failure or success? 'The *struggle*, not the attainment measures the character.'

Strafford was no saint, but his faults were those of a strong nature. Harsh he often was; treacherous, or diplomatic, as you will; some might even call him cruel; but he was a brave soldier and a loyal subject, and an upright, honourable gentleman.

He failed, as the world counts failure, yet perchance those who can see 'with larger, other eyes than ours,' may count it to him for victory.—PETER.

'THE NOBLEST ROMAN OF THEM ALL.'

'Spirit is the positive, the event is the negative. Will is the North, action the South Pole. The feeble souls are drawn to the South, or negative, Pole. They never behold a principle till it is lodged in a person.' 'Spirit is the positive, the event is the negative.' The words might have been written with special reference to Marcus Brutus. Most surely did the event belie that great character which must have been built up in a lifelong struggle with natural inclination and feelings, which was revealed in that last terrible struggle with them, and which was not in the least represented by the disastrous issue. It was scarce possible that a man should succeed who, in this eminently practical world, attempted to live entirely by theory. His was a contemplative, brooding nature, turning his thoughts constantly inward upon himself; the very faithfulness with which he adhered to that strangely misconceived idea of duty warping his judgment in other directions. Noble and unselfish, generous and lovable, we can have nothing but admiration for him in his domestic and social relations. The deep, sensitive feelings can only be gauged by the force with which the iron will was bent to control and master them, sternly denying the relief of natural emotion at the death of his 'dear brother,' or even of his beloved wife.

The transparent sincerity of his own nature misled him in his dealings with men who, though less scrupulous, were certainly not abler than he. He lacked the practical grasp of realities, and therefore his action was wide of the mark and failed to effect its purpose. The very fact of the deed being so antagonistic to his whole nature, and so repulsive to his feelings, made him think all the more that he was heroically obeying the call of duty. When we catch a glimpse of his troubled mind as, in those few moments of solitude, he make the sad confession that the days drag on like a 'hideous dream,' we feel grieved that so noble a nature should be struggling thus painfully against such heavy odds—in the meshes of bondage to an overstrained theory.

His practical life was a disastrous failure, and his dying words confess that Caesar has conquered after all; but for such a man, says Professor Dowden, 'the true failure would have been disloyalty to his ideals—of such failure he suffered none.' The very strength of his character, the integrity and purity of his motives, worked the downfall of a course which was utterly unworthy of them. He passed away in peaceful consciousness of fidelity to his own high standard of upright morality and spotless honour. We cannot but feel that crime is not a word that can touch this beautiful, high-souled character. May be not—nay, must we not—turn away from the fatal mistake, and look into the depths of that great heart whose crystal clearness is scarce shadowed by it?—LOYAUTÉ.

---

PRIZE WINNER FOR JUNE.

Miss C. M. Whidborne, Charante, Torquay.

---

VARIETY SUBJECT FOR AUGUST.

Six favourite religious poems (not hymns in actual use), giving reasons and short quotations. Poems of which only a few verses are commonly sung may be chosen.

---

CHARACTER STUDY FOR AUGUST.

A Town.





5. Canterbury Cathedral. (CHAUCER. Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.)

6. The quotation most frequently given is the beautiful one in which Ruskin compares mountains with cathedrals. It will be found in 'Modern Painters,' vol. iv. part v. chap. xx. One competitor also gives his beautiful comparison of the Bay of Uri from the same source (vol. v. part vi. chap. ix.). Several more give the the forest comparisons from Kingsley's Prose Idylls ('My Winter Garden,' and from 'At Last I'). Longfellow's sonnet, 'My Cathedral,' describing a forest, is most applicable.

#### MARKS FOR JUNE.

70: *Athena, Double-Dummy, E. V. B., Eleanor, Helen, Honeylands, Imham, Isabel, Lenore, Melton Mowbray, M. R. A., Nemo, Scott, Thorshaven.*  
65: *White Cat.* 60: *Dianora, E. T., Proserphina, Syndicate, The Blue Cat, W. Spurling.* 59: *Sophonisba.* 57: *F. R. D.* 55: *Aspley Guise.* 54: *A. C. R.* 50: *Unsigned.* 48: *Trimmer.*

*Fourteen Streams* is credited with 60 marks for May.

*May answers*, No. 4 (2). The writer of the old Song is SUSANNA BLAMIRE.

#### SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR AUGUST.

('Nature's Bank-dividends.')

1. Who called on the 'sun-burn'd sicklemen of August weary' to 'make holy-day'?

2. What is a kern-baby?

3. Quote passages showing what a 'blood-red ear found in the husking' denoted to Evangeline and Minne-haha.

4. What befel the 'lovely young Lavinia' when she went to 'glean in Palemon's fields'?

5. Of whom is it said (1) that she 'stood in tears among the alien corn,' and (2) that

'She stood breast-high amid the corn,  
Clasped by the golden light of morn'?

6. Give one verse from a favourite song on the subject of these questions.

#### THIRD SHELF.

##### QUERY.

Miss K. Andrews will be very much obliged if any readers of THE MONTHLY PACKET who have the December and Xmas Numbers (1895) to spare would communicate with her. Also she would be glad to know if any one could let her have THE MONTHLY PACKET for 1897—half-price. Address—Miss Andrews, St. Deny's Home, Warminster.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### QUOTATION FROM PRIVATE LETTER.

*Wanted—a Bridge.*

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—Would not a discussion in your 'China Cupboard' be useful with a view to developing some scheme for bridging over the gulf between the poor girls (I quote from your 'Attic Window' in this

month's PACKET) working at the starvation wages of 1d. for sewing buttons on a dozen shirts (just think of it!) and the unfortunate ladies who are in despair of hearing of a parlourmaid or cook—or even a scullery-maid—willing to learn with the rudiments of a knowledge of cooking? I do not at all suggest that girls could be transplanted from sewing shirt-buttons straight to domestic service. That of course would fail. But might not poor yet respectable parents be persuaded to let their girls go while *quite* young, at once on leaving school, to training-homes where they would be fitted for domestic service? They would then be taught a trade that *will* pay, and would grow up strong, useful women, a help and credit to their country, instead of half-starved, weak, and anæmic, many of them to fall inevitably (if they live) upon the rates for maintenance.

Chelsea China asks for discussion on this interesting letter.

#### BOOK NOTICE.

*The Way of a Woman* (L. T. Meade). E. V. White & Co. Mrs. Meade's last book, 'The Way of a Woman,' is certainly not deficient in sensationalism of plot, but whether such sensationalism is an improvement on her earlier work may well be doubted. Her hero, whom we suspect of more than a touch of insanity, could only be regarded (if his brain were not turned, first by his folly and crime, and then by his religious mania) as a thorough cad for allowing a girl, under the circumstances, to marry him. 'I am not calculated to make Marjory happy, but she is calculated to make me blessed.' How a man who had saved his life by marrying a girl he disliked, at the same time that he was engaged to another whom he loved, and afterwards murdered her—a man who was an habitual opium-smoker—could think himself justified, not to say right, in taking holy orders will be a mystery to many. Mrs. Meade appears to approve of it. We wonder also at the secretary of a British Consulate being foolish and imprudent enough to join a secret Anarchist Chinese society, with no better motive than that of idle curiosity, and also, when he got into trouble and danger, at his ignoring the apparently simple expedient of an appeal to his chief; while it is, besides, not easy to understand Quintin Garstin's sudden development into the most powerful and popular preacher of the day—a preacher who, regularly and as a matter of course, sent great part of his congregation into hysterics. The Church scenes read like a ghastly parody, and one questions whether Mrs. Meade writes in earnest or irony. Compared to Mr. Garstin the Salvation Army may be counted moderate! The heroine Marjory—dressed perpetually in 'dove-like grey,' with a character to match—may be good, but is decidedly not interesting. Like Aristides she is too much bepraised to be attractive. Her sister Liliias is merely an hysterical, religious enthusiast, and at times Mrs. Meade leaves one in doubt as to whether she intends her to be admired, pitied, or laughed at. It is news to hear that members of a 'Sisterhood' are accustomed to use 'evening costume.'

The close of the book is in keeping with the rest of it. Garstin dies suddenly just as he has made up his mind to confess the story of his life to his collected and expectant congregation, and in the last sentences the reader is invited to speculate as to his prospects for eternity. But the subject is too serious to be jested over.

Intentionally or not, the tone of Mrs. Meade's book grates on one. Extravagant in plot and execution, it is a burlesque more than a study of character; and the numerous personal descriptions—'ethereal visitant,' 'lustrous face of great beauty,' 'big black eyes like sloes,' 'the raven head,' 'the shapely neck,' 'the lissom and lovely little figure,' &c.—are worthy no doubt, of a penny novelette, but not of the authoress.—COMMUNICATED.

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

JAPAN. II. AS IT IS.

QUESTIONS FOR AUGUST.

29. What native religions exist in Japan? and give our position and hopes with regard to each of these, and with regard to the Japanese Government.

30. What religious bodies (other than those of the Anglican Communion) are at work in Japan, and with what hopes of success?

31. Give short accounts of Bishop Poole, Bishop Edward Bickersteth, Archdeacon Shaw, John Imai, Andrew Shimada, and any one other missionary in Japan.

32. What was the policy of Early and Mediæval Church Missions with regard to heathen customs?

Books recommended:—*Classified Digest of S.P.G. Records; Under His Banner; Historical Sketches, Japan* (1d.); '*Japan*' (*Story of the Nations Series*); *Apostles of Mediæval Europe*, by Maclear (Macmillan, 3s. 6d.).

Answers to be sent to Bog-oak, Industrial School, Andover, by Sept. 1st.

CLASS LIST FOR MAY.

CLASS I.

M. P., 40; Klondyke, 39; Honeysuckle, 36; Ierne, 33; Veritas, 31.

CLASS III.

Maiden Aunt, 13.

CLASS LIST FOR APRIL.

(Unaccountably omitted in June.)

CLASS I.

M. P., 39; Honeysuckle, 37; Ierne, 35; Klondyke, 32.

CLASS II.

Maiden Aunt, 22.

CLASS III.

Veritas, 19 (three answers only).

Also—"M. P., 50," in May No., misprint for "M. P., 40."

REMARKS.

17. The Act of the Zanzibar Government of 1897 was not emancipation of slaves, but abolition of the legal *status* of slavery, a much slower process, successful in India; but legal forms take time to impress the African. This Act should have been given by all. It is mentioned in '*Africa Waiting*.'

18. *Ierne*.—Zanzibar Cathedral has never been consecrated. It was 'opened' in 1879 (not 1889).

19. *M. P.*'s map of Central Africa is beautiful for accuracy, execution, amount put in, including latitude and longitude (omitted by some), and clear arrangement. Kichelwe is the only omission. *Klondyke's* comes next.

20. Six workers to illustrate successive periods of work, and three hundred to choose from! Archdeacon Johnson and Sam Speare come in five papers; Mr. Scudamore, Mr. Sim, and Miss Bartlett in three; Mr.

Alington and Miss Mills (two); while the names, Burrup, Randolph, Janson, Porter, Bellingham, Sheriff, Karn, and Cecil Majaliwa occur once each. Bog-oak *thinks* her own six for the six portions of time would be Horace Waller, Arthur West, Archdeacon Fearler, Miss Thackeray, Archdeacon Johnson, and Miss Mills, though it would be hard to leave out Father Woodward.

### 'MONTHLY PACKET' NOTICES.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

The readers of the 'Monthly Packet' are invited to address CHELSEA CHINA on any subject the discussion of which occurs to them as likely to interest others, especially in connection with articles appearing in the Magazine.

#### CHINA CUPBOARD PRIZES—

*Variety Specimens.* Prize, monthly, 5s.

*Search Questions (Who, When, and Where).* Prize, for six months taken together, £1 is.

*Prose Competition.* Monthly Prize, 5s., or 10s., according to merit.

#### RULES for the above—

(1) Papers must be sent by the 25th of each month, addressed to CHELSEA CHINA, care of Messrs. A. D. Innes & Co., Limited; they must NOT be addressed to 'the Editors.' (2) Each envelope must be marked *outside* with the subject to which it refers. Papers under separate competitions or discussions must be in separate envelopes. (3) The correspondent's name and address must be written on every paper: the use of a *nom de plume* for the lists is optional. (4) If competitors fail to comply with any rule, their papers will be disqualified. (5) The real name of the prize-winner is published in each case. (6) There are no entrance fees. (7) Prizes cannot be taken by the same person twice in a half-year.

#### PROVERB COMPETITION, 1898.

It appears to us that a set subject fails to attract authors of experience, or to elicit their best work. We therefore cordially invite stories for next year's Christmas Number to be sent in without limit of subject, to be chosen according to merit and paid for in the usual manner. The PROVERB COMPETITION is limited to authors under 25.

All stories not to exceed 10,000 words, to be sent in between JUNE 1st and JULY 1st, 1898. Proverb stories to be headed PROVERB COMPETITION, CHRISTMAS NUMBER, outside the wrapper, other stories CHRISTMAS NUMBER only. Stamped cover or stamps to be enclosed for return.

Illustrate this quotation in a story—

'Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them.'

[The Editors of the 'Monthly Packet' will feel obliged if All Contributors will write their names and addresses clearly on their MSS., and will enclose stamps for return. Unless these conditions are complied with, the Editors cannot undertake to preserve, return, or enter into correspondence about MSS. Much trouble is saved if accompanying letters are enclosed in the parcel instead of being sent separately.]

The utmost care is taken in returning MSS., but the Editors can only hold themselves absolutely responsible for such as are sent to them at their own request.]

# THE MONTHLY PACKET.

## NEW SERIES.

---

SEPTEMBER, 1898.

---

### *THE GOSPEL WRIT IN STEEL.*

BY ARTHUR PATERSON, AUTHOR OF 'FATHER AND SON,'  
'FOR FREEDOM'S SAKE,' ETC.

---

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

LIEUTENANT CATFORD was perplexed when he received his mail. The conversation with John puzzled him still more. Who and what was this Burletson? The letter from Richmond was simply a formal order that on the first day of July Lieutenant Catford was to surrender command of Santanelle prison to Lieutenant Ralph Cunnington and report himself to General Johnston, commander-in-chief of the army in Georgia. When Catford first read the letter he set John down as a fraud of the first water. He felt it only remained to find out whether he was the victim of a practical joke, or whether—his blood ran cold at the thought—whether this pretended subaltern in the thirteenth regiment of Hood's was a spy! Just as the horrible idea occurred to him John came in. Catford's nerves were thoroughly out of order and his brain muddy and confused with last night's debauch. John's coolness, his evident acquaintance with Cunnington, extinguished the fear that he was a Yankee in disguise and aroused a new suspicion that had been in Catford's mind the day before. A spy he still believed him to be—but from Richmond, not the enemy. Catford knew that he was not in favour in high places. Some time before, when he had complained bitterly to friends at Richmond of his long exile at Santanelle, he had been warned that if he did not wish to

lose his commission he had better remain quiet, and it was hinted that certain facts of his past life had become known to Jefferson Davies. The president of the Confederacy was a man of strong prejudices and accustomed to act in a very arbitrary fashion where his feelings were aroused. What if this Buletson were an emissary from him, instructed to examine the condition of the prison and its defences and the conduct of its commander? Catford shuddered at the thought, and when his visitor, after some general conversation, said that he wished to see the stockade again, he gave permission with a readiness that he trusted would have a beneficial effect.

‘Go anywhere—do anything you please,’ he said, with a ghastly attempt at cordiality. ‘I will give orders to my sergeant to show you round. There is nothing you may not see.’

John thanked him, and, determining to make the most of his time, asked for the key of the mine. Catford gave it, accompanied him to the guard-house and issued the necessary orders to his men.

The sergeant, a short, surly-faced Georgian, gave a significant grunt as he went with John to the stockade.

‘He gives you leave to do what he’s never done himself till yesterday.’

‘Never been in the stockade?’

‘No, sir. I don’t care if you know it, and a little more too. How long will you be around here?’

‘That depends upon my instructions.’

‘Strong-constitutioned man, ain’t you?’

‘You mean this place is not a healthy one?’

‘The most *on*healthy in creation.’

‘Prisoners seem sick?’

‘Oh, blame the prisoners!’ the sergeant said irritably; ‘I mean us boys. We have nothing to eat; nothing to do; no fun and no fighting; naught but dirt and Yankee funerals all day, and stinks all night. *He’s* well fixed,’ with a turn of the head towards the lieutenant’s quarters; ‘officers don’t starve, you bet. But I tell you it’s tough for the men. If we did not take some of what they send for the Yanks we’d not get along at all. You did not know it?’ looking shrewdly at John; ‘fact. Tell ’em so in Richmond if you like. I s’pose you are from there?’

'Ask your lieutenant,' was the reply.

They were at the stockade gates now, where the sentry saluted John, who left a gold Confederate coin—given him by Sherman—in the sergeant's hand. He then sauntered slowly through the enclosure, looking at the groups of prisoners, and speaking to one here and there as if he were making a close inspection, until he came to the far end, and to Seth, whom he found more comfortable than he had left him. The attentions the prisoners had seen him receive from a Reb officer, coupled with a mysterious rumour that had got abroad of help and rescue, had caused them to cultivate Seth's acquaintance. A bed of tattered clothing had been made for him, and some food found. When John sat down by his side, and drew from his pocket a pot of beef jelly, slices of chicken and bread, and a flask of brandy, the speculation among the prisoners began to grow feverish.

'Did you ever see a Reb do that before?' one said to his neighbour.

'No, nor do I now. He ain't a Reb!'

'He must be.'

'I will bet you a week's rations he's not. If he were, wouldn't he find a way of pulling that cuss outside? He's a spy.'

'Good luck to him, then.'

'Oh, blast him and all the rest of our boys! Why don't they exchange us or send Sherman round this way? No one cares, I tell you. They let us sicken and die like flies. Damn them—Government, Lincoln, and all!'

'Hush ye—he's goin' to speak.'

John was beckoning to them.

'Boys, crowd round me so that the guard can't see us. Then listen—I am a Union man.'

At first they looked at him with blank faces; then one moved forward, then another, until a compact press of bodies surrounded him.

'Before midnight to-morrow,' John said in a low voice, 'I hope one hundred of Sherman's boys will have reached this place, and set you free. I did not mean to tell you beforehand, as these things are never to be depended upon, and I thought I would be here to bring the boys along; but I find that I shall be discovered before then. I want you to know that I have the key to the mine that runs beneath, and

that I intend to stay and hold it as long as I am alive. The other danger for you is the guard. Don't give them any excuse to fire. That is the great point. Keep quiet and let the boys come to you. Whatever happens don't try to get to them. Above all the Rebs must not have a notion that you know anything. Make no noise, show no excitement until our boys have pulled those gates apart.'

He knelt beside Seth again, while what he had said spread from man to man until all the three hundred knew. Most of them did not believe it, but some—those nearest to him—were convinced that it was true, and as John talked with Seth these men came one by one and shook hands with him. They said nothing, but many were crying. All understood that if their freedom came it would be paid for by his life.

It was a strange ending to what John had come to do. The day before, had there been time, Seth would have sent his last message to Jean, now it was Seth who would live, for he was only suffering from weakness and bitter home-sickness. It was John who must die. He might have thought about saving his own life but for the mine and the fear that his sudden absence should create suspicion on the part of the prison guard. The mine settled the matter. At any risk it must be closed up and held or all his plans would be frustrated. He had little time for leave-taking, but between the hand-grips from the prisoners he managed to give Seth his few brief words for those in Chippewa.

'Tell mother, with my love, that I don't worry, because I know that she will feel things are right, and after the first shock is past be glad I died this way. She will have Jean, thank God. You will not separate these two? I know you won't. You need not tell me. As to Jean, I do not know that I wish you to say anything. She is yours—not mine. Wait—there is just this,' his voice was a whisper now: 'tell her, lad, that when I started for you I did not expect much to get back again; but I went because I could not see her break her heart. I loved her more than all the world. There, I did not mean to say it; but it don't matter. You won't tell her that. Now I must go or they will be seeking me. Heart up, man! Don't give way now—don't think of me. Think of to-morrow when the boys march in.'

He sprang to his feet, and as he walked out there was a smile on his face that Seth will remember until his last day comes.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

JOHN found the sergeant waiting for him at the gates of the stockade. It had reached the men that this officer was on a tour of inspection from Richmond, and as none of them bore any goodwill toward their commander, they were more than ready to assist the stranger's inquiries. The sergeant was his sworn ally.

'Any kind of thing you want to know or see, I will put you on in a flick,' he said.

John did not reply. He was watching a man on horseback who was approaching them from the town at a smart pace.

'Have you a key to the mine?' John said suddenly. 'I was down yesterday and wish to look at it again.'

The sergeant took a bunch and fumbled with it, while the horseman drew nearer and nearer and John saw the sunlight glance on the scabbard of a sword.

'You will let me have it back,' the sergeant said, wrenching the key free; 'there is but two, and this lock is of a peculiar make.'

John nodded, took the key and began to walk towards the hut. The horseman was Cunningham himself and had turned in his direction. But John was close to the mine, and, slouching his hat over his eyes, he quickened his pace, unlocked the door and stepped inside before the lieutenant recognised him. Keeping the door ajar, he heard Cunningham address the sergeant and then trot off to Catford's quarters. The danger was over for the moment, but discovery and detection would only be a matter of minutes, for his name was known to both the men. How to make the mine stand a siege? It was hopeless. He shut the door, lit the lantern, and inspected the hut. Nothing was in it but a barrel of gunpowder. He turned his attention to the trap-door, threw it open, descended the ladder, and measured the distance to the bottom of the mine. It was ten feet. He climbed up again and drew the ladder after him. This was a matter of difficulty, as there was barely room in the hut to dispose of it. Now he heard the sound of footsteps, and the voices of two men—two men only. His heart gave a sudden leap. There was one chance left. Catford, as it turned out, had positively refused to believe that his lieutenant and Cunningham's Yankee courier could

be the same man. John blew out the light and crept behind the door. The handle was turned and the two men entered, Catford leading. As Cunningham crossed the threshold John shut the door swiftly and seized Catford by the throat and belt. A struggle, a heavy fall and a cry as from the depths of the earth. Cunningham, startled and confused in the darkness, drew back and clutched his revolver, but before he could draw it he was caught round the waist and swung forward; the ground seemed to slide from under his feet and he dropped down—down into space until he struck something soft, and fell sprawling upon Catford at the bottom of the mine. Above them came the clang of the closing trap-door, and John, panting with his exertions, drew the bolts securely. He stood there a moment listening for any sound outside. None came, and he groped his way to the door and opened it. No one was near. The officers had apparently given no warning to the men of their visit to the mine. To make sure of his ground, however, John locked up the hut and strolled in a leisurely manner to the guard-house. He was relieved to find most of the men at their evening meal.

‘Where is the lieutenant?’ he said to the sergeant.

‘Dunno, sir. Didn’t you say, Jim,’ addressing one of the men, ‘that he’d walked to the mine with the new officer?’

‘That’s so.’

‘I have just been there,’ John said quietly. ‘Don’t matter, I will go to the house and wait till he returns.’

He glanced round the faces before him. None showed the least interest or surprise. He was safe—for the time.

Time—that was the one thing needed. The boys ought to be on their way now. How long would it take them to ride those sixty miles? Would they come at all? He thought so. Sherman would risk a hundred men, and Bob would see that there were plenty to volunteer.

John went to Catford’s quarters and sat down in the same chair that he had occupied the evening before. There was no one in the house besides himself but a negro, who was busy in the kitchen. The place was rank with stale cigar-smoke and the fumes of wine and spirits. A bottle of brandy and a dirty glass stood on the table. The man had been drinking again to-day. John took up one of Catford’s yellow-backed novels and turned the pages mechanically. What to do next? There were the guns covering the stockade and the rifles of the men.

John began to try and devise means of spiking them but could think of none. His brain seemed dull and heavy. If only Bob were here with his sharp wits! There seemed nothing to be done but to wait. A restless desire tormented him to go to the hut and peep at the trap-door; but he crushed it. Already he had seen surprise in the sergeant's face at his desire to visit the mine a second time. It was possible that his movements were already watched. What was the condition of the men in the mine? The bottom was soft. They would not be severely hurt. But they were firmly held there; no power below could raise that trap-door; no shouting underground could be heard outside the hut.

A step on the floor of the room outside—soft and stealthy. John put the book aside and quietly drew his pistol; then he sprang up with an exclamation, for it was Bob Spenniker.

The little man looked white and exhausted, and was covered with dust from head to foot.

'Any one around?' he whispered, glancing suspiciously about him.

'Not a soul. What has happened?'

'I'll tell ye soon. Le'me sit.'

He threw himself into a chair, coughing and expectorating violently, while John shut the door and window.

'What's this? Brandy? Jerusalem and honey, that beats all!' And pouring himself out half a tumblerful, with a very little water, he drank it and smacked his lips.

'Well, I feel better,' taking some more without water and sipping it. 'Where's the lieutenant?'

'Safe just now. Did you get to the army?'

'I did so, and the boys are coming—a hundred picked by Sherman himself. Gosh, he's keen on the business, you bet! But they won't be here till sundown, maybe later. It won't be no use.'

'They'll do better than I thought.'

'You thought!' Bob exclaimed contemptuously. 'Your idea about riding, boss, don't amount to anything at all. I was in the general's tent at dawn and by sun-up had started back—the boys following as fast as they could lick. If a hundred could ride as one, they'd not be far away now. But they can't, it stands to reason. Besides, I've killed my horse,' he added carelessly, 'though that's neither here nor there.'

'It is everything to me,' John said, with feeling. 'If there

were a chance of my getting through I should owe it to you.'

'Chance! *You're* all right. But where's the lieutenant, anyhow?'

John told him all that had happened, at which Bob swore fearfully and drank more brandy to the 'health of that blasted mine.' 'We had better stroll around to guard, then,' he said. 'We must not have any of them fooling about near that shanty.'

'I have thought about it and intend sending one of the men to look for the officers in town. Did any one see you?'

'No, sir! I did not know how things might be fixed so I came the back way.'

'Right. Then take my horse and wait somewhere quietly for the boys outside. Remember, if they don't see me, they must strike first for the mine. With that in their hands they have everything.'

But Bob stood up with rank mutiny in his face.

'See here, John Burletson, I have obeyed you oncet, and against my will rode all last night and near all this day and killed as good a beast as any in this army. I don't leave you again. It ain't in the contract. I came to stay with you. Your life were in some danger before, but there will be hell to pay now when those boys are out—blue hell-fire! If we quit together it'll be a square deal, but no more back-handed revokes. Now, you won't go—I know you won't because of what would fall on the prisoners; therefore I remain. I don't care about *them* a red cent, but where you are I am going to settle. You go and talk with those boys while I work some food out of the nig cook. I will not be far away from you. Leave me alone, and if the enemy keep quiet I'll leave them alone. If they start in, I'll cut their cards to rights—or try.'

John shook his head, but it was only in silent protest. He saw that Bob was determined, and he had not the heart to press the point further.

He found the guard talking in groups and evidently becoming uncomfortable at the continued absence of their officer. The sergeant looked worried and cross.

'He always was one for going on a bust when the fit seized him,' he said to John. 'But then it was at night and after telling me. It's that stranger has took him off. I wanted a spare hour or two to myself this evening. Just my luck.'

'Send into town for him,' John suggested.

'What's the use? He won't come.'

'Say I want to see him at once, then he will.'

The sergeant brightened a little. 'That's a healthy idea. I will tell a man to ride there. Do you send a letter by him.'

John returned to the house to write one. The air was cooler, the sun drawing near the horizon. Two hours more and the boys might be here. The letter despatched, John strolled round the stockade with the sergeant. The sun sank lower and disappeared; a dusky grey line appeared on the eastern horizon, spreading minute by minute from a mere film of haze until it became the darkness of the night. They stood together, the sergeant growing more and more uneasy every moment. Suddenly he wheeled round in a listening attitude.

'Hear that?'

John's heart sank. He had heard it—a dull, curious sound, something like a heavy blow against wood, yet not a blow. It was the smothered report of a pistol.

'It is from the mine,' the sergeant said. 'They can't be there after all, and had an accident? Hand me the key.'

John felt in his pockets one after another. 'The thing must have dropped out. But you said there was another.'

'Curse it all! The lieutenant has that one. If he's in there——'

'He cannot be.'

'Something is, anyway. Come with us, cap'n, we must worry this through together.'

The sergeant was becoming suspicious. John drew himself up. 'Call your men, then, and get something to force that door.' He spoke in a stern tone of command. 'If there is an accident it will be serious work. Lose no time.'

He walked away in the direction of the hut, while the sergeant, after a quick glance at him, ran to the guard-house. Again a shot was fired from the mine, and again. All the men had heard them, and came running to the spot fully armed. Then they heard another sound—the report of a rifle—from the lieutenant's house.

'Who, in the name of the devil,' cursed the sergeant, stopping short as he was about to dash a musket-butt against the lock, 'can have done that?'

'Are all your men here?' John said. 'Some one has pulled his trigger by mistake.'

'It may be that,' growled the sergeant. 'Now, boys, down with this thing.'

It was easier said than done. The door was of oak, well put together, and the lock, as the sergeant had said, was of peculiar make. Again and again blows were rained upon it until the musket fell apart in the sergeant's hands.

'Get me an axe,' John cried, as the man paused, panting. 'If you had your wits about you, sergeant, you would have thought of that before.'

A man was off to the guard-house in a twinkling but several minutes were gained. Two axes were brought and a couple of men set to work with a will and made the splinters fly. At last the door gave way. It was getting dusk now, and the hut was darker than ever. A match—no one had any—yes, the sergeant found one at the bottom of his pocket; as he lighted it some one jerked his arm—they were all crowded together—and it went out. Another delay, during which the sergeant swore with bitter emphasis, until a lantern arrived. In the meantime the sound of smothered voices was heard underneath the trap-door. The excitement grew every minute. The lantern came; the bolts were drawn, the door thrown back, and a man's head appeared—Lieutenant Catford's—his face blackened and bruised almost beyond recognition. The first man he saw, as he clutched the edge of the flooring and crawled out, was his enemy, standing beside the sergeant. The minute before a thought of escape had entered John's head but had been dismissed. They might fire the mine. Their rage must be expended on him first. Catford was weak and dazed by the fall and confinement and want of air; but the sight of John roused him to fury.

'The spy,' he cried—'the infernal spy!'

'What are you raving about?' John answered, in contemptuous tone, stepping forward.

'You devil!' shrieked Catford, springing at him; but John had expected this and flung him to the ground. The men stared, stupefied; then, at a word from the sergeant, they seized John by the arms.

'I will not resist,' he said to them; 'but be careful what you are about, there is a mistake.'

'Kill him—shoot him!' yelled Catford, now beside himself, but keeping out of reach.

'No, take him prisoner,' said another voice—Lieutenant Cunningham's. 'Give the man a fair trial.'

'Let us get out of this hole anyway,' the sergeant protested. 'If there's any firing here the powder'll be alight.'

At this remark there was a general retreat and John was hustled into the open. Then Catford, drawing his sword, thrust Cunningham aside.

'I am in command here. Stand back. Boys, that devil is a Yankee spy. Shoot him like a dog. Ten of you fall in.'

'You are a liar!' John retorted; 'I am no spy. Lieutenant Cunningham, I spared your life once. Give me time to make an explanation.'

Again Cunningham would have interfered, but Catford waved him back.

'Load!' he cried to the men. The ramrods rang sharply. 'Present!'

Crack!—a single report and flash which seemed to come from one of the men, and with a gasp and a groan the lieutenant himself fell grovelling on his face. A few of the men fired at John then, but they aimed wildly and the shots flew high.

'Steady, you fools!' the sergeant said. 'There's double treason somewhere. That shot was from behind. Close round this man and take him to the guard-house. If one more shot is fired let go at his heart. Good God! What's that?'

There was a new sound in the air—the thunderous beat of horses' hoofs. The men stood still, dumb, confounded.

'Face about, men—face about!' shouted Cunningham at the top of his voice. 'Fire at the cavalry—fire!'

But his words came too late. A score of horses were trampling round them, a score of sabres flashed above their heads.

'Surrender!' cried a voice, stern and uncompromising. Then, as the Confederates sullenly laid down their arms, 'Where is your prisoner? If any harm has come to him not a man of you shall live. John Burletson, are you here?'

'You bet your bottom dollar, major,' cried Bob Spenniker's voice in answer. 'Didn't I tell ye I'd see him through? You never knew me break contract yet.'

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was holiday time in Chippewa. The whole of the Selby family, with the exception of Luke, were staying at the farm with Mrs. Burletson, an arrangement which suited every one

concerned, except John's manager, Jim Hallett, who was nearly driven wild by the mischievous doings of the Selby boys. These boys, Sam and a younger brother, were animated with the best possible intentions, but they had active minds and still more active bodies, and they had both seriously resolved to become farmers. So, when they found that the men about the farm were too busy to answer their innumerable questions, they started upon a voyage of discovery upon their own account. Their system of self-education was a course of practical experiments upon all agricultural produce, living and dead, from the cattle in the meadows and the chickens in the yard to a mower, a chaff-cutter, and a wire rat-trap with a rat inside. That they were chased by an indignant bull and nearly tossed; kicked head over heels by a vicious horse; bitten very badly by the rat which they intended, Sam said, to 'train for a circus'; nearly decapitated by the chaff-cutter, and severely cut about the fingers by the mower, did not cool their ardour in the least. They ought, in the end, according to the Sunday-school books, to have met with violent and painful deaths, for they had no mercy on anything that moved; but nothing worse than cuts and bruises happened to them, and when haymaking began, even Jim Hallett was mollified by the way the urchins worked, and one afternoon was found by Jean teaching Sam to ride.

The summer this year was fine and dry, and in those warm June days Mrs. Burletson and Jean sat out all day long among the grass and flowers, the hum of bees, and chirp of grasshoppers. They were always busy, sewing hard for the children at home and the boys at the war, for each had her share of work to do for the Sanitary. Sometimes Mrs. Haniman would join them in an afternoon, only that she never sewed. 'I find it restful here,' she said once, sighing; 'though I always wonder why, for a busier woman never lived than you, Sarah; and you have a heavy care.' This was when they heard that John was dangerously wounded.

Mrs. Burletson looked at Jean.

'I have some one to share it with me, Martha, that is why. I get no chance to be lonely.'

Yet they did not talk much in those days. At times Mrs. Burletson would tell anecdotes of John's childhood, which her companion was never tired of hearing, but Jean said little. It was a restful time for Jean, in spite of the anxiety and suspense.



The bond between her and Mrs. Burletson grew daily, and the day the news came that John was well again and had started for the prison they sat together for a long time holding one another's hands, and when they parted for the night Mrs. Burletson held Jean close and kissed her again and again.

'My dearest girl, what should I do without you now? God was very good to give me such a daughter when He took my John.'

'For a time, mother,' Jean whispered back, 'only for a time. John will come back again to you, I know he will. He must.'

Mrs. Burletson shook her head.

'He may. I believe that he will, but it cannot be to stay. Years ago, Jean, the day the war began, I said that if ever John went South it would be to make his mark. He has done so. The letter from the President, God bless him, and the note that doctor sent me the other day show it. Of course John says nothing. But I must not forget that as a great soldier my boy belongs to the country and not to me. If when he comes home you ever hear me say one word likely to make him feel that he should stay here, tell me right there. I will not have that happen. His love for me cost him three years of bitter longing; it shall never stand in his way again.'

Jean spent a very restless night after this talk. She was anxious about Mrs. Burletson. The old lady was wonderfully cheerful, but Jean saw plainly how she languished for her boy. She would pore over his letters by the hour together, and as time went on she grew more silent, her movements became less brisk, and Jean even fancied she was losing flesh, and was certain that her appetite was not what it ought to be. Dr. Selliger, however, whom Jean called in privately one day, laughed at these fears, and said he had never seen Mrs. Burletson looking so well. But it so happened that the Committee of which John had been the founder, and the doctor chairman, was enlarging the scope of its work in a manner Mrs. Burletson did not approve, and the day the doctor called she gave him a piece of her mind.

'John ought to be at home,' Jean said to herself that night; 'I shall write and tell him so. Let other men risk their lives; his is too valuable. The worst of it is he never thinks of himself, and if he feels it is his duty he will go through with it all. But I am sure when he sees the change in his mother since he went away he will feel that he should stay at home.'

Yes, I will write,' and with this resolution in her mind Jean went peacefully to sleep.

The next day Mrs. Burletson was not so well as usual, and sent Jean into the garden alone. Jean found it dreary work sewing by herself, and was about to see what had become of the boys, when she saw a sturdy figure tearing up the road from town, and recognised Sam. Fearing that some serious accident had happened, Jean ran down the garden path to meet him. As he drew nearer she heard him cheering and whooping in a wild state of jubilation, and was reassured. By the time he reached her his breath had all gone, and, thrusting a telegram into her hand, he threw himself on the ground, exclaiming in a series of gasps : 'Oh, I'm so tired—They're going to have a bonfire—Isn't John a trump?—Aren't you glad he's coming back?—I am.—Hurrah !'

It was the best of news—'Seth safe—We come home at once.—JOHN.'

It was now Jean's turn to speed the good tidings, and having hugged Sam, to his great surprise, she ran to the house. Mrs. Burletson met her at the door ; she had heard the joyful shouts, and Jean thought she looked ten years younger when she read the precious news.

Some days passed, and then mails from the boys arrived ; a letter from John to his mother, one from Seth to Jean. Mrs. Burletson finished hers first, for John, though he did his best, had never written a long letter in his life, while Seth, to Jean at least, had never written a short one. The old lady looked curiously at Jean, and for the first time since John went away felt a sudden sense of disappointment. The girl's face was flushed ; her eyes shining with a happy light.

'Is she really content after all?' Mrs. Burletson thought. Then she reproached herself. 'My ideas were foolishness, yet I did begin to think——'

But now Jean looked up, and Mrs. Burletson's reflections stopped.

'The best letter the dear boy ever wrote. I shall read it to you, mother. It is all about John. Seth tells just what we want to know, and which John will never tell.'

She began to read, and Mrs. Burletson gave a little sigh of relief.

'I was too quick in judging, as I always am,' she thought.

'“As to how the thing was done, you must get particulars

from John," Jean read. "I cannot tell you anything first hand, as I was shut up, limp and miserable. But I know what happened afterwards. We had been waiting all day, when, just as darkness came, we heard a scrimmage. We kept quiet as mice and were about as scared, for beneath us they had laid a mine of gunpowder, which they swore they'd fire were any attempt made at a rescue, but we listened and held our breath,—for it would be death or freedom now. First came a single shot, then a quick volley, then a cheer. 'It's the boys!' some one cried. 'It's the Rebs,' growled others, 'keep quiet.' But a few minutes afterwards we heard a hammering at the gates, and then we knew that we were saved. How we yelled and cried and swore in our delight and joy while they got the keys and unlocked everything! and then when the doors were opened, what a rush was made for them! I was too weak to stir, but some of the boys picked me up and the rest made way, knowing I was John's friend. I can see it all now. The moon had come out, shining upon our boys as they sat on horseback, scores of them, laughing and chaffing the prisoners, who were now mad and drunk with joy, while in the centre stood John—the man who had worked it all—white as a sheet, but cool and upright, not one bit carried away, not conscious, I believe, that the cheers were mostly meant for him. When he saw me he ran up, and all he said was, 'They have saved us, Seth; we have to thank Major Templeton and my man Bob for this.' Afterwards we were attacked on the way to Sherman by Reb militia, two hundred and fifty strong. It was a surprise. The boys were beaten back, the major killed, and things looked queer. But they had given John command of a reserve of fifty men, and with these he charged. I saw it all, for we were on a hill at the time. If ever I had been in doubt that John was a fighting-man I must have taken back my words then. Steady as a rock and straight as a line he led his men upon their centre. They met him fairly, but naught could stop his boys. What was the secret? Why, they were *led*. When we got safe to the army at last the first man to shake hands with John was General Sherman himself. He did so before all his staff, and you should have heard the cheering. John will be promoted, of course; yet he declares he will come home with me. I'll believe it when I see it. He's the hero of the army now. That I or any of those three hundred prisoners are alive to-day is owing to John, and

every man here knows it, and before long all the folk at home, from Lincoln downwards, will know it too.”

‘That is a real beautiful letter, my dear,’ Mrs. Burletson said, wiping her eyes. ‘It is pleasing of this young man to write so of my boy. Yet he should, should he not?’

‘Yes,’ Jean said, looking with hungry eyes at the sheets in Mrs. Burletson’s hands. But she did not see their contents this time and felt pained and hurt. Later she was beset by a vague yearning and unrest, which troubled and perplexed her, and after this she did not talk of John so freely to his mother as before. John kept his word. The pressure put upon him to remain in the army was very great; but in his breast-pocket he carried something which caused him to withstand it all—the letter from Jean. She had written as she had resolved to do, putting down in plain words her anxiety about his mother. After reading this, all the glory and offers of promotion in the world availed nothing with John. His return home, however, was delayed longer than he expected. General Sherman, amid the rush and turmoil of the taking of Atlanta, found time to send a few lines to the President about Santanelle, enclosing Lincoln’s own letter and recommending that though John refused to serve he should be given a captain’s commission. Lincoln wired an affirmative reply, and wrote to John telling him to come and see him. This correspondence caused the destruction of John’s peace for many a day. The papers picked it up, and the news of the exploit spread through the North like a prairie fire. Before John had been in Washington an hour he was stormed by interviewers. Before he had been there ten all the public men, from whom he had humbly sought the boon of an introduction to the President, called upon him with compliments and invitations to their houses. Then, through a base plot organised by Seth, he was photographed, and the next day his likeness was in the shop windows, and people cheered him in the streets.’

John bore it well enough on the whole. He was ably supported by Seth, who seduced him into the purchase of an officer’s uniform, and was invaluable to the Pressmen by the number of circumstantial details of John’s life and late adventures with which he supplied them. But upon one thing John was unyielding. He had promised his mother that he would not stay in Washington more than two days, and no invitations from great people, no flattery—nothing could induce him to

break that promise. On the second day, therefore, before they went to keep their appointment with Lincoln, tickets were taken by the midnight train to Chippewa.

Lincoln received John with the smile of an old friend.

'You are welcome, truly welcome, Burtleton,' he said, with a long hand-grip. 'Is this the man you went to visit in the South? I am pleased to meet him. A Northerner who has tasted Southern hospitality—and lived—is worth seeing.'

He made them both sit down, and asked them many questions, keeping them with him an hour. When they rose at last to take their leave he grasped John's shoulder, and turned his face to the light.

'You are older by years, friend, since we met. Is that your wound or fever?' He slipped his hand down and felt the muscles of John's arm. 'No; it is not fever. You are hard as hickory wood. It is a trouble of the mind, yet you sold your hogs and now carry back your fifty dollars with interest.' He smiled with a quaint shake of the head. 'I do not like you, John. You have cold-shouldered Uncle Billy, who is your best friend; and have left the army-ladder for some one else to climb. You are a fraud, as I told you once before. What does it mean? The country wants you. I, its representative, tell you so to your face. What have you to answer? Say!'

'My folk, sir—my mother—wants me most of all. You, Mr. President, have a thousand men as good and better. My mother has only me.'

'Yet you left her,' Lincoln said sharply. 'You set no price at all upon your life—to sell those hogs.'

John dropped his eyes. 'There was—no one else to go,' he muttered.

'H'm,' said the President, glancing at Seth. 'No doubt that was so, but—well, I wish I knew any man who would do as much for me.' He looked slowly from one face to the other, and still holding John with his right hand, placed his left upon Seth's shoulder. 'How long is it since you boys first met?'

'A year before the war,' Seth answered.

'Yes, I remember what you told me, Burtleton—all that you told me. Mr. Cotton—that I believe is your name—tell me what you think, will you?'

Seth started at the sudden question and then looked confused. 'I don't—I really do not know—what to think of it,' he said

lately. He found it very difficult to speak under the gaze of those searching eyes.

'You do not. Then let me tell you a little story. Two boys once saw an apple growing away up on a tree. It was the finest apple they had ever seen. Both wanted it, but one had chores to do and reckoned to see them through first. The other had no chores, and climbed, and picked the apple. Coming down he lost his hold, and hung by a branch over a spiked fence. He cried for help, and the first boy left his chores, went up that dangerous tree like a young buck possum, stepped right among the branches over the spiked fence, and pulled the climber out of danger at the risk of his own life. Meantime the apple had dropped upon the grass. The boy who picked it took it up and ate it, but it was said by some that the apple did not belong to him. Now, friends, my time is up, and you must go. Goodbye, John Burletson.'

He shook hands with them both, and as John tried to thank him stopped him with a gesture of impatience.

'That is just nonsense. I am placed here to do what one man may for the nation. That often means hard things to the individual. In your case I did my best to kill you. I knew the risk you ran, you did not. God, when He brought you safely through, my friend, treated me better than I deserved.'

*(To be continued.)*

*ACROSS TWO OCEANS.*

## THE BIOLOGICAL NOTES OF A SAILING VOYAGE.

---

To be becalmed in a sailing-vessel in mid-ocean is an experience; there appears no special reason why the ship should ever move again. These, at least, were my sensations when, after beating down the Australian coast and passing through mountains of green seas off Cape Leeuwin, our ship lay well-nigh motionless in a semi-tropical region of the Indian Ocean, waiting in vain for the 'trades' which never came. At the rate of progression it would take fully three months to make Cape Town; time seemed lost in eternity, and a cyclone even would have been appreciated by many of those helpless on board. Day by day the sun blazed down upon the glassy sea; not a sail appeared on the horizon as the weeks passed almost into months, and our isolation was complete. But there are compensations in every condition of life; occupation had to be devised, and as we constructed trawl-nets for towing at the ocean surface the interest became so absorbing in the marvellous wealth of pelagic life that the sense of monotony altogether passed away, and wondrous collections were accumulated for examination long before the voyage had ended. Every haul of the net yielded sufficient material to stock a small marine laboratory, the chief difficulty being to determine the nature of each living thing, for the investigation of which whole libraries of books—covering the entire invertebrate fauna—were requisite. Orders and genera might possibly be ascertained, but specific details proved a hopeless study without such works of reference. The amazing beauty of our captures, however, deserves a record, imperfect as it is; and my chief regret is that words convey so slight an impression of the extraordinary character of the fragile organisms in their sublime environment.

As the sun dips into the sea and the orange sphere is lost beneath the horizon, the glare of burning light passes away from the surface of the waters, and millions of animals—driven down by the fierce solar rays—once more reappear. A good pair of marine glasses reveals their movements in the water; and the tow-net is laden with spoil. From a multitude of organisms I will select several vivacious, gelatinous bodies for examination, members of that mysterious tunicate class Protochordata which apparently links the invertebrate to the vertebrate kingdom. A specimen of *Salpa maxima*, transferred from the net to a bucket of sea-water, is at first sight a very lowly organism, as it propels its flat, elongated body rapidly by the expulsion of the circulating water. The compact jelly mass is of crystalline clearness, ten inches long by three inches in breadth, having a circular orifice for a mouth. An inner tunic contains the circulatory and digestive organs, and has also the inhalent and exhalent orifices characteristic of all ascidians. The creature is transparent and colourless except for the round crimson patch in the central cavity which represents the gizzard and allied parts. There are gill-slits in the inner tunic suggestive of the similar contrivances of the most humble fish, *Amphioxus lanceolatus*; but in order to witness the circulation of a large *Salpa* some staining process is necessary, and in this way alone can the remarkable reversal of the circulating current be seen, although the contra action takes place every two or three minutes. Some of the smaller *Salpæ* are infinitely preferable for microscopic observation, especially those delicate, barrel-shaped little creatures, veined with pale blue or yellow, in which every organ and channel with flowing current is visible, whilst the individual body does not exceed the sixth part of an inch. Here we may observe the food particles engulfed in a viscid secretion passing into the digestive cavity, and the water circulation flowing and reflowing according to its peculiar habit, guided, no doubt, by the throbbing of the spasmodic valve that serves for heart and motive power. The radiant beauty of the transparent organism under a strong illumination forms the most exquisite object, pulsating in its natural element on the microscopic stand. The marvel is that such a frail structure, which perishes with a touch, can survive and flourish amid the turmoil of the waves. This small *Salpa*—complete in itself—has an alternating form of life, during which the simple gives



place to a compound mode of existence. The solitary organism is developed from the ovum, the embryo being nourished within by the parent body; the free larval form has a tail, and it is in the transitional stage of existence that the chordate structure is evident. If this is regarded as an incipient vertebrate character, the fact should be borne in mind that the position is ventral rather than dorsal—surely an important modification in comparison with true vertebrates. The ovum invariably produces the solitary phase of development, but the same organism is capable also of asexual reproduction by means of buds from a creeping stolon within the parent body. From these arise the colonies of chain Salpæ, and it is possible to observe the three generations incomplete inside a solitary animal. The forms are interchangeable, and all are probably descended from a type which possessed the chordate tail throughout life. All these wonderful gradations can be followed at sea with a little microscopic assistance, quite easily on a sailing-ship, but with greater difficulty on board the rushing mail-boats.

One night, between eleven and twelve o'clock, the whole ship's company were attracted by wide belts of phosphorescence extending a mile or more on either side through which our course lay. The luminosity extended many feet deep, being non-intermittent and yielding an intense white glow. The net was at once thrown overboard to plough through the radiant matter. To the surprise of all, instead of being easily drawn up to the poop, on this occasion it required two strong men to overcome the resistance created by the phosphoric zone. The bag, in fact, had to be drawn through a very solid mass of gelatinous ascidians, or tunicate animals, nearly related to the Salpæ, called *Pyrosoma*—I presume on account of the light-emitting qualities. The life-history, on the whole, corresponds closely to that previously described; the glory of the liquid fire in the darkness of the tropical night beneath the Southern constellations is simply beyond the power of words. Spellbound we stood and gazed in silence. During the remainder of the night I had a number of *Pyrosoma* in an empty meat-tin in my darkened cabin, where they swam and flashed brightly at their own sweet will. The late Professor Moseley wrote his name with his finger on the side of a large specimen, the letters standing out brilliantly in the dark for more than twelve hours afterwards. There are innumerable

kinds of the tunicata existing as free-swimmers at the ocean surface, whereas most of the genera which occur on the sea-shore or within tidal zones have fixed habits of growth, except in the larval condition. The littoral kinds are less generally attractive organisms; they are ugly in shape and dingy in colour, the free-swimmers having all the grace of rapid motion, transparency, and delicate coloration, with the progression of young torpedoes, darting headlong through the waters—characters which serve to fascinate the eye.

The familiar, yet hideous, Octopus is usually associated with rocky clefts in our tidal pools, but many genera of Cephalopod mollusca swarm at the surface in mid-ocean, especially in the immature condition. The first specimen that I saw at sea was taken still living, though minus one of the eight tentacles, from the maw of a great Bonito. Mottled red and brown in colour, the body, inclusive of feelers, was barely three inches in length. The ink bag was filled with a dull red fluid; a double row of suckers ornamented each tentacle, and the goggle-eyes almost protruded above the head. After some slight dissection I obtained the perfect internal shell. Some eight weeks afterwards, whilst fishing in Table Bay, I hooked a huge monster of the same kind, measuring 3 feet 4 inches in length, that fought on deck with surprising pertinacity until beaten to death with a belaying-pin. It took three of us to unravel the tentacles, whilst the suckers adhered with great tenacity to boots, legs, or anything that came handy. The great beast blushed deep red, turned slate-grey or yellow brown with amazing rapidity, a process that was more easily observed with smaller species at sea. A squid, for example, can be watched as it sails round a basin, with the crown of tentacles in vigorous action. The pigment cells are very remarkable. The fleshy envelope is almost white, and the colour spots appear to rise suddenly from beneath the epidermis; the black or brown particles successively coalesce like oil globules into distinct patches, breaking up again as quickly as they form, and then a rosy blush takes the place of the black or brown pigments. I could not determine whether the contents of the ink-bag had any relation to the colour cells, or if the two systems were altogether separate.

The beautiful Argonaut has a close relationship to the Octopods, as the animal apart from the fragile shell shows. The mollusc is really independent of the cover, and the male

is always a free-swimmer. My experience is that the empty cases only are found floating within the region of the Agulhas current, where we took three specimens untenanted. Only the female inhabits the shell at any time, and when the creature swims at the surface the coil of the shell is uppermost; only a small portion shows above the water. Thus the ancient fable of the Argonaut—which originated with Aristotle—that the shell was propelled by the sails hoisted by the animal to catch the wind, is destroyed, and the allusion contained in the name to Jason and the 'sailors of the *Argo*' who sailed to Colchis to find the Golden Fleece is not so happy as it might have been. One of the Coelenterata, the well-known Velella, is really the floating animal that supports a triangular sail. The uncovered male Argonaut is rarely more than an inch in length, the eight tentacles being elongated instead of palmate, as in the female. One arm becomes specialised for reproductive purposes; it is eventually detached as a free-swimmer in order to fasten itself to the larger female in the shell. Another empty, but chambered, shell often contained in the net was the *Spirula lavis*, convoluted like a ram's horn. This is really the internal skeleton of a cuttlefish, nearly allied to the fossil Belemnites. All the shells we took had small barnacles attached; a section showed the syphon tubes penetrating the septæ of the cells, like the structure of a Nautilus. The Argonaut shell has no chambers and the animal is absolutely unattached. I obtained the living *Spirula* without ascertaining the fact that the shell was internal, until books at home revealed the same. At other times we had living Calamaries (*Loligo*) and the *Sepia* under daily observation, both of which possess a pair of additional feelers, projecting beyond the crown of eight tentacles, flattened at the ends like oars and armed with suckers. The eggs of the *Sepia* I found floating singly, exactly like the fruit of the common sloe both in form and colour. The Calamary has the posterior end of the body flattened and some of the suckers are curiously hooked. During a voyage of twenty weeks other Cephalopods were captured both in the Indian Ocean and Sargasso Sea, but I lacked the means either for preservation or identification. Specimen bottles of various sizes containing formaline should be carried by collectors at sea. Certain fishes I did preserve in spirit, incurring thereby the deadly enmity of the sailors, who stoutly maintained that bottles of rum were wasted for such a purpose. A fine porcupine fish

(Diodon) travelled home safe and sound thus pickled and sealed in a French-plum jar, arriving in such good condition that it was fit for the shelves of a public museum.

The deep purple sea-snails (Janthina) are common enough a thousand miles away from any land, but none the less attractive because they are plentiful. Amongst this gastropod class of the mollusca my attentions were fully occupied with the gorgeous-coloured Nudibranchiata, which possess feathery external gills on the uncovered bodies of every imaginable hue. *Scyllæa pelagica* haunts the gulf-weed, the mottled yellows and browns of the animal being indistinguishable from the colour of the weed itself. The rudimentary shell only exists beneath the fleshy mantle, but when we come to examine the eggs microscopically the singular fact is evident that the embryo is contained within a shell, which is left behind, so to speak, in the process of development. The Indian Ocean equivalent has a black body with grey and brilliant blue streaks thereon. An examination of the swimming animal shows two pairs of lobed and tufted branchiæ, together with dorsal retractile tentacles, all splendidly ornamented with rich blue tips. But perhaps the finest of all the uncovered Nudibranch molluscs in these sunny seas was a golden-yellow species somewhat allied to a British sea-slug, known as *Dendrionotus arborescens*, with five orange-tipped, tree-like gills, foliated tentacles, and a feathery corona encircling the head. This magnificent object has siliceous spicula embedded in the flesh, and a low magnifying power exhibits not only these anchor-shaped spines, but also the circulation. The wonderful variety of these creatures includes colours of all shades, from pure white with opal tints, rosy-pink, rich browns, amber, yellow and gold, torquoise blue, to gradations of more sombre hue. By subtle transitions the group of the Nudibranchiata pass into molluscs of another class, viz., the wing-footed Pteropoda, with or without shells. At eventide in the tropical seas millions of restless Pteropod shells dash to and fro at the surface, glinting in the half-light like so many fragments of glass. The larval Nudibranch mollusc very closely resembles the fully developed 'wing-footed' group; at the first glance, indeed, the latter animals, which happen to be shell-less, might be taken for Nudibranchiata minus the external gills. The wings and head are contractile even when the shell is absent, and the bodies then look like bits of compact indianrubber.

The shell-bearers are exquisitely coloured with ruby-red, yellow or brown, many having defensive spines as a protection against foes. Off the Cape the needle-cased *Creseis aciculata* swarmed, the little wings waving vivaciously from the mouth of the transparent tube, within which the bright green organs of the animal were plainly visible. I gathered thousands of these sharply pointed tubes at a single haul of the net. Some animated bell-shaped organisms with a ciliated rim after the style of free-swimming Vorticellidæ puzzled me for many days, for the transparent cups manifestly contained an embryo of some higher organism. It was only after close attention the fact dawned upon our minds that the supposed bell animalcula, or perhaps medusoid embryo, was really the larva of a Pteropod shell, *Hyalæa tsispinosa*, careering madly in the water, which was afterwards obtained in many transitions for microscopic observation.

Sometimes it happened that large animals passed the ship rapidly ; a glimpse only could be obtained by those on board and the object vanished before due observations could be made. Within a few hundred miles of the Azores this occurred, when an organism belonging to the Ophiuroidea eluded the trawl. The circular body supported four arms, each one at least two feet in length, waving frantically in the sea—five is the normal number of rays, and within a few minutes a separate arm floated by, evidently severed by the bows of the passing ship. The colour of this Echinoderm was a deep brown on the upper side, and numbers of small animate processes fringed the formidable rays. A better description I am unable to give, and some doubt remains as to the precise nature of the creature.

The variety of Jelly-fishes (Coelenterata) at sea is simply appalling, and I could find no better introduction to the study of the sub-kingdom than the section of the 'Royal Natural History' devoted to the subject. Sydney Harbour has a strawberry-coloured *Rhizostoma* commonly floating about on the tide, whilst Port Philip has a blue counterpart of the Port Jackson species. Both have eight swollen tentacles extending from the transparent bell, and the plate (p. 493) in the book referred to is a very faithful representation of the swimming animal. In like manner I have been able to identify a mid-ocean *Tessera*, a delicately blue-grey coloured medusoid nearly related to the *Lucernaria*. The rim of the bell is lobed, and

the projection which forms the central square mouth is surrounded by sixteen tentacles beautifully ringed ; and through these the colour grains circulate freely, the whole organism being microscopic in size. I cannot even enumerate the endless wealth of brilliant jelly-fish, Venus' Girdle, Ctenophores, Portuguese Men-of-war, Syphonophora, and a host of others assuming every size, shape, and imaginable colour. The transitional stages of many Cœlenterate animals are a veritable puzzle, and there must be hundreds of important transformations which remain for original investigation. Hæckel's theory of the ultimate Gastrula condition as the type of all the Cœlenterata is important to the evolutionist. It is illustrated in the life-history of a small coral—*Monoxenia Darwini*. The polype produces the round ovule, which during the process of segmentation splits up successively into two, four, eight, &c., until the full complement of cells appear in a globular sphere which is profusely ciliated. Then a remarkable change occurs, whereby one half infolds with the other half, forming a semicircular larva with two layers of cells in the wall. This, according to Hæckel, represents the primitive Gastræa form of Cœlenterate organisms long since extinct. The Gastrula of the *Monoxenia* is still contained within the parent body, the later transitions not yet being known between it and the mature polype. The Gastrula of many other species appears to be known, and now I know for a certainty that many obscure forms taken in the Indian Ocean as free-surface swimmers belonged to this category. One beautiful blue larva I attempted many times unsuccessfully to cultivate in live-cells, but just when developments commenced the creatures always died, owing to the difficulties experienced in the prevention of decomposition of small quantities of sea-water in tropical atmospheres. I certainly had Gastrula bodies with double cell wall as described. The truth is, that if satisfactory results are to be obtained from biological observations at sea, an extraordinary amount of special knowledge is required beforehand ; and day by day an impotence to deal thoroughly with the products of so great an opportunity oppressed my mind. I wanted the accumulated experience of a *Challenger* expedition, together with appliances beyond the reach of an ordinary individual.

The common little microscopic Cyclops of pond life serves well as an example of the marine Copepoda, but it is colourless.

In the tropics the many kinds of these oar-footed Entomostracea assume an amazing brilliancy of colour, bright red, blue, violet, and parti-coloured like the rainbow. One specimen, taken off East London, had a semi-transparent body with prismatic tones which resembled a fragment of jewelled thirteenth-century glass rather than a minute water Crustacean. The violet species—a glorious object when magnified some fifty diameters—had the appendages containing ova, and I often took the Nauplius stage with faint indications of coloration. The whale is a big animal, but it is said to feed on the red Copepods, amongst other things, which occur in such myriads that the sea is tinged red by their presence. Some of the water fleas (*Daphnia*), a closely allied group of Entomostracea, are equally bright in blue and vermilion garb.

At times we had an all-night sitting with the net in order to enjoy the coolness of the tropical darkness. I well remember a school of porpoises crossing our ocean pathway about two hundred miles south of the Mauritius. At midnight the water was glowing with phosphorescence. The net itself left a trail of fire in its wake, an incident that seemed to attract the attention of the passing Cetacea. Keeping pace with the ship, they dashed hither and thither in bold curves, every movement revealed by the intensity of phosphorescent light. Every moment we expected the net to be carried away by the antics of these huge creatures, but absolute contacts were always deftly avoided, and we simply enjoyed an unrivalled pyrotechnic display.

In the vicinity of St. Helena I had many chances of following the development of various crabs from the Zoëa stage to the mature, short-tailed Crustacean. No one could imagine that the helmet-shaped larva with frontal and terminal spines had any affinity to a crab; yet with a little patience each modification can be followed out beneath the microscope. First, we find the free-swimming Zoëa about the size of a pea, an embryonic, segmental tail being usually coiled up beneath the frontal helmet. The needle-like spines fore and aft are fully an inch long, and the minute eyes are sessile. In the second stage four pairs of legs are developed, the lengthy spines disappear, and the animal assumes the round-bodied form. In the third stage a fifth pair of legs exist, the incipient carapace grows, and the eyes are carried on stalk-like pro-

minences. Finally, the true decapod structure is revealed, the tail is hidden beneath the carapace, and a true crab remains from the strange larva which might be anything rather than a crab. For many years the embryonic creatures were classed in a separate genus, and few could suspect the direct connection. Sometimes the sea swarmed with these small Crustacea, and the net near to St. Helena was full of them. Amongst the long-tailed Crustacea (sub-order *Macrura*) I constantly had the curious long-necked shrimp (*Leucifer*) under the microscope, a small and insignificant animal in the natural size, but a marvellous structure when duly enlarged. Every portion of the slender body is transparent, yet delicately tinged with red. Each segment has a distinct division, but external branchiæ are wanting. The integument is so thin that each pair of ganglia attached to the ventral nerve-chord can readily be traced; the legs are finely ciliated, and the divisions of the tail appear wondrously complete. The chief peculiarities occur about the head, the long neck projecting far beyond the body, with the addition of a pair of sharp pointed antennæ and most exquisite stalk-eyes raised on pear-shaped prominences tapering away at the base, the facets of which we might gaze at for ever in reverent awe. The Master Hand is behind such perfect mechanism, a Power that our limited intellect can never hope in this world to understand. At one time the net would be full of brilliant blue shrimps; others had a peculiar mixture of blue and bronze coloration, whilst others were bright red; none exceeded an inch in length.

There is some obscurity as to the exact relationship of the marine Annelids, Nereis and Heteronereis. One day I took scores of fully developed Nereis of a pale rose-colour, their active serpentine movements in a basin of water proving a source of considerable attraction. The larger specimens were four inches long, the regular segments being marked by the corresponding pairs of legs. An enlargement of a small worm showed the cruel power of the formidable jaws, and the entire length of the alimentary canal through which the food particles incessantly passed. Heteronereis I found sparingly distributed; it is undoubtedly a larval stage of the complete Nereis, well characterised by the undeveloped condition of the latter half of the body, the segments being united and the legs merged in a feathery sort of ribbon-fold at either side. The remarkable thing is that the Nereis often produces young ones completely



formed. Some of the Nemertine worms are wonderfully organised. The four-eyed, transparent ocean species, *Tetraslemma obscurum*, reveals every detail of internal structure, the organs being crowded with circulating granules. The flat *Nemertine pterosoma* occurs generally at the surface in the Indian Ocean, the mulberry-coloured; the lateral folds of the body are distinct to the naked eyes. The five lobes of the folds appear in constant undulation in the water, serving as a locomotive power. The ciliated larva is quite unlike the parent worm, and I failed to classify either the one or the other until I found the figured specimens at home. The creature is, in fact, a near relative of the tapeworms, although until recent times it was associated with the mollusca. My show slide beneath the microscope was usually a minute violet animal enclosed in a glassy case, which still remains included with the gastropod molluscs—*Atlanta peroni*. The shell, if such a slight test can be so called, is spirally coiled but unchambered. The glassy texture enabled one to see the movements of the animal within.

The breathing gills are enclosed in the dorsal part of the mantle; the foot has three lobes, one part supporting the operculum. As the mouth is extended the fragments of food are engulfed and crushed by the internal mill, or digestive apparatus, which is incessantly at work. The superb colour renders the object highly attractive, and I have known a man leave a game at poker to view the specimen. Nothing more can be said in praise thereof!

Sea-anemones are not always attached to the rocks, for in mid-ocean we find some genera with the fleshy base modified into air chambers which enable the organism to float under pelagic conditions of life. I had a deep rose-coloured larval form frequently under observation, but we never succeeded in collecting the full-grown specimen. A red kind is also frequently met with at the ocean surface, occurring in dense masses in warm seas. Space forbids me to continue the description of the innumerable creatures we encountered during a sailing voyage of 140 days home. It need not be supposed that it was a prolonged period of absolute calm; on the contrary, the first month proved to be nothing but a succession of heavy gales with perversely head winds, a time of discomfort and affliction. In the Indian Ocean calms were frequent; our progression was sometimes backwards. Then

off the African coast a young hurricane burst upon the ship, and for three days she made her three hundred knots, sailing in a violent manner on what the captain euphemistically termed 'the edge of a cyclone.' Then the elements settled down again and we pursued the even tenor of our way. Sailors are superstitious animals. Whenever my net appeared trawling alongside it was at once remarked 'No more progress now the net is out;' for at any speed above five knots such operations became impossible, the net being torn by the force of the water. My manipulations, truly enough, were evidences of a comparative calm; but by some subtle process of reasoning the sailors convinced themselves that I was the cause of the absence of wind.

The net itself was a very simple contrivance kindly designed for me by the most obliging of captains, who, by the way, took a keen interest in my various captures, and as often as not hauled in the net himself. The bag was about four feet deep, rounded into a sort of pocket, and made of a coarse cheese-cloth material. The beam—three feet across—had an iron hoop underneath to form a wide mouth. The tow-line had three points of attachment, one at either end of the beam and the third from the middle of the hoop; the three joined in a common slip-knot—so regulating the length—that the net could be made to float far away from the side, or near to the vessel, as the occasion required. The tow-line itself was secured to one of the overhanging davits, with a handy bowline, whereby the trawl could be readily hauled on to the poop. The occupation was all-engrossing, and for me the twenty weeks of ocean sailing passed all too soon away. The opportunities, alas! for such experiences are well nigh a thing of the past, and the ocean liners have it all their own way.

C. PARKINSON.

*OFF THE HIGH ROAD:*

## THE STORY OF A SUMMER.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE, AUTHOR OF 'IN THE LION'S MOUTH,'  
'YOUNG DENYS,' 'MISS LATIMER OF BRYANS,' ETC.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

## AT THE FEAST.

'Ah, show them where in ambush stand  
To seize their prey, the murderous band!'

THE festivities at Stepford were in full swing. That August day was sometimes too hot for enjoyment ; sometimes, but very rarely, it was hopelessly wet, and then the old inn on the green, the 'Goat and Compasses'—its sign a record, like the feast, of Stepford's religious life, but in another period—made a fine harvest of holiday-makers driven indoors. This year the 15th was a calm, quiet day of grey clouds which threatened nothing, letting soft gleams and lines of blue appear far off between their fleecy edges. The distance was clear ; the air was soft and warm, even a little oppressive in the great tent where the women and children of Stepford were sitting at tea.

A few farmers' wives and other superior people were bustling about, waiting on the merry throng ; there were chattering tongues and smiling faces everywhere. The old rector of the parish, a bent, white-headed, kindly man, had said grace for them, and now lingered shyly in the tent, finding with difficulty a word to say here and there to somebody whose face he knew. His remarks were not always fortunate. He was rather too apt to ask some widow about her husband, some mother after her child, over whom he had himself read the funeral service not so very long ago in the little churchyard on the other side of the green. But the people bore him no malice. They have a good deal of patient philosophy and a tolerable sense of humour.

'Law bless you, it's only Mr. Simmons,' they said one to another.

Mrs. Downes and Jessie were always among the leading spirits at this parish tea. Mrs. Downes generally took a seat in a corner and talked to neighbours she only saw on this one day in the year, except sometimes on Sunday after church. But her church-going was not very regular, for she could not walk, and was often too rheumatic to venture in the pony-trap with Fidget and Jessie. To-day everybody missed her; but all kind inquiries were answered by Jessie with the assurance that Mr. Arnold would bring her over by and by. In the meanwhile many curious glances were directed towards Jessie's new companion. People had seen her at church, it was true; but she always avoided observation as much as possible, sitting behind a pillar, and escaping, with her hosts or without them, before the rest of the congregation had risen from their knees.

It happened that to-day several of the usual helpers were absent from one cause or another, and the work of making the tea go off well, of seeing that the provisions held out, and that everybody was satisfied, fell rather heavily on Jessie. At first she went about with one eye—speaking in a figure—on cakes and tea-urns, the other on Viola; but presently the old occupation, the old interest and responsibility, asserted themselves so strongly that she was no longer able to watch her precious charge as she moved about the tent.

There seemed to be no reason for any special anxiety. Viola was in a happy, playful mood that day, and was inclined to devote herself to the smallest children. She sat down among them, and took a chubby little boy on her knee, amusing herself with feeding him and playing with him, while the others, attracted by her lovely smiles and her strangeness to the point of forgetting their hunches of cake, crowded round her with staring blue eyes and grinning faces. This was going on when two men, tall and short, appeared in the entrance of the tent and stood there for a few minutes looking about them.

Jessie Downes, carrying a large tray of cake, passed by on her way to one of the farther tables. Mr. Arnold stepped forward to meet her.

'Give me that,' he said; 'I'm fitter to be a beast of burden than you.'

Jessie looked up, rather surprised, as he took it from her.

'Oh, here you are, Joe! Where's mother?'

'Your mother changed her mind and didn't wish to come.'

'Why! is she ill? Is anything the matter?'

'Perfectly well, only a bit tired, I expect. It's the oppressive weather,' said Joseph.

He felt very uncomfortable; but it was impossible to blurt out the whole thing to Jessie here and now. As he carried the tray his eyes wandered round the tent rather anxiously.

'Where's Miss Field?' he said. 'I don't see her.'

'She must be here. She was here just now. Oh, there she is among the little ones. They do look happy, don't they? She is so sweet to them.'

'Ah, I see,' said Joseph. He stood for a moment looking at the wonderfully pretty picture. There she sat in the midst of the Stepford children, laughing herself and making them laugh. He had never seen her look happier, younger, brighter, more simple and girlish. Any little dignified airs that had repelled him had disappeared now; though they would only have seemed natural to a man of his sort, who knew that he was looking at a girl with noble blood in her veins, and—which impressed him more—half a million of money to be hers in a fortnight.

'He was a soft, that young Dampier—for he's not a bad-looking chap, after all, and he might have had a chance. Well, I should have grudged him that piece of luck, I must say,' Joseph Arnold thought as he looked. 'It's quite time, and it's entirely the right thing, to stop your little games, Missy. We'll turn you over to the proper authorities as soon as may be. I wonder if Black is sharp enough to see her sitting there?'

By this time he had deposited his load and strolled back to the door. Evidently Mr. Black was an ornament to his profession. He had stepped just inside, where no dazzle of light interfered with a good view of the interior. He had a glass in his eye, and he held the precious photograph rather low down in his left hand. He had already glanced several times, with an air of quiet satisfaction, from the portrait to the original.

'That's all right, Mr. Arnold,' he said in his cautious voice, as Joseph rejoined him. 'No mistake there.'

'And what is to be done next?'

'I leave that to my superiors. By and by, when you are inclined to drive me back to Tarringford, I shall wire to town

again. But I doubt whether Mr. Marston will wait for further information. He will probably be down to-night with the solicitor, Mr. Keane, I daresay.'

Joseph listened in silence. His satisfaction was of a more troubled and less entire kind than that of the little agent. For him there was a personal interest—stronger than a business one, business man as he was—in the discovery of Viola.

'You did not mention my being here, I suppose,' murmured Mr. Black at his elbow, 'to the lady you spoke to just now?'

'To Miss Downes? No—no, I did not. She is—rather gone on the heiress, you understand. I wouldn't trust her not to take some strong measures even now to keep her out of her guardians' hands. Women are unreasonable—they get things into their heads——'

'Yes, very true. I always find ladies harder to deal with than men,' said Mr. Black.

'We may as well go outside,' Joseph suggested. 'Miss Downes was too busy to notice you just now, but there might be a bother if she did.'

As they turned out of the tent Mr. Arnold nearly tumbled over old Harry Holt, who had been lingering outside for some minutes, now and then peeping with curious eyes into the shadowy interior. At one moment his curiosity had brought him very near Mr. Black's shoulder, for the smart little stranger was a puzzle to his rustic mind; but he had very soon stepped back, and stood just outside the door with his hands in his pockets, gazing across at the cricketers on the green.

'Hallo, Mr. Holt, what are you doing here?' said Arnold, with the good-humoured, patronising air which old Harry particularly hated.

'I'm just looking about me,' he replied. 'I was looking at the children inside just now. I want my tea, and my sister's in there waiting on all them young 'uns. It's a bit hard on us, Mr. Arnold—I don't know the other gentleman——'

Harry paused for an introduction.

'A friend of mine,' said Arnold quickly.

'Ah, a friend of yours. Well, as I was saying, we didn't get all these treats when we was young; and now when we're old it's a case of waiting till the youngsters are served. At both ends, you see, we get more kicks than halfpence. Isn't it so? But you gentlemen are both a good spell younger than me. Mr. Arnold, a word with you, if you please.'

Arnold walked aside with him, while Black strolled on in the direction of the cricket match.

It seemed that Harry was a good deal puzzled about his money affairs. Arnold had let him know several weeks back that he need not hurry or worry about that £700 for the present ; but the old man had not yet succeeded in getting any very clear idea of why this should be so. He put it down to something Miss Field must have said—what, he was at a loss to imagine. Now he seized the opportunity of asking for some sort of information.

He met with very little success, however. His creditor, who had suddenly become so unnaturally lenient, flushed darkly with discomfort and anger. It had occurred to him that Miss Fairfax might be too angry with Stepford and its associations to care to keep Miss Field's generous promises.

'Well, Mr. Holt, I can't tell you much,' he said impatiently, while the old man stared into his face with wondering blue eyes. 'Circumstances made it possible for me to wait a bit. About the future I can't say—I can't indeed. I told you we would say no more till the first week in September. Are you not satisfied ?'

'Oh, satisfied—yes, I'm always satisfied,' said Harry. 'But I want to know——'

'If you are satisfied you are a lot luckier than most people,' said Arnold, with a laugh. 'But look here, I can't talk business now ; I've got to look after my friend.'

'Where does your friend come from ? He ain't a Tarringford man.'

'Why do you ask ?'

The question was so sharp that Harry withdrew into his shell with a great appearance of timidity. But his eyes twinkled in spite of that.

'I like his looks,' he said. 'He's such an interesting little gentleman. We don't often see the likes of him at Stepford Feast. His clothes has quite a London cut about them.'

Arnold looked at him, and it seemed as if his keen, dark eyes must read every thought in the mind of this babyish, innocent, little old man. But look as he might, old Harry Holt was a sealed book to him.

'I'm sure my friend ought to be flattered,' he said ; and then he walked off with long strides to overtake Mr. Black.

Harry Holt watched them till there was a clump of trees between them and the tent, and he could see them no longer. Then he went quietly back to the entrance and looked in once more.

'Now what may those chaps be up to?' he asked himself. 'It was her and nobody else. Oh, it was speaking!'

He stood there patiently for some minutes. Nobody took any notice of him. Miss Maria was far too busy to give him a thought, and all the women and children of Stepford, except the little group who could hardly eat for staring at Viola, seemed bent on making up for months of starvation. Jessie Downes, one of those practical people to whom everybody refers in a difficulty, was busier than anybody in the tent; so busy that she was not aware of the increasing stuffiness of the atmosphere, certain sooner or later to drive her charge into the fresh air she loved so much.

As the tent became stuffy the children became sticky. This also had its speedy effect on Miss Fairfax. Old Harry, watching her, could hardly believe his eyes when she got up suddenly, deposited her chosen baby on the form beside his little sister, and walked quickly to the door. He stepped out as she approached, to make way for her, and she instantly joined him outside.

'Ah, I saw you playing with the children,' the old fellow said, pleased and encouraged by her kindly greeting. 'You're a ministering angel, that's what you be.'

'Oh no, Mr. Holt,' said Viola smiling; 'angels have something better to do than to feed babies with bits of cake. Besides, an angel would have stayed to the end. Now I ran away, because the babies and the cake were both rather sticky. An angel would not have minded that, you know.'

'Oh, they've other works. They give the children as much as is good for 'em, and then they go about comforting old hearts and softening stony creditors. Don't tell me it wasn't you as persuaded Mr. Arnold to wait till September. Not that I know what's going to happen then.'

'Something nice will happen then,' said Viola, a little mysteriously. 'September is a delightful month. I prophesy that you will like September, Mr. Holt. Whatever you do, don't be afraid of it. Trust me, September will bring you more good than harm.'

Harry stared at her with mystified eyes. They walked away



together, his odd, sturdy little figure stumping along by the side of her slender youth and grace.

'One thing I've got to hope for,' he said. 'Maybe September 'll bring Mr. Edwin back among us. I'd give something to see him again. I suppose you can't give me no news of Mr. Edwin, ma'am.'

Her head was a little turned away at the moment, and she answered more carelessly—'No, I have heard nothing of him.'

Neither would she give any satisfactory reply on the Arnold question, turning off his attempts at discovery with laughing ease.

She hardly noticed where they were going; anything was pleasant after the atmosphere of the tent. In fact they were walking along a narrow green lane which led direct from the village to Harry's farm and the hill beyond. They were leaving the games and rejoicings behind them; even the band which was now playing under the trees near the tent began to sound a little distant.

Harry suddenly startled her from her state of quiet content by a question of a new character.

'Did you see that smart little chap as came over with Mr. Arnold?'

'No. By the by, Mrs. Downes was to have come. Why did she not come, I wonder?'

'I know nothing about Mrs. Downes. But I thought maybe the little gentleman was a friend of yours.'

'A friend of mine! What can you mean, Mr. Holt? What could a friend of mine——' she stopped and checked herself; but her look and manner at the moment were quite enough to frighten Harry. What could make her turn upon him like that? She went on more gently, however—'I have no friends in this part of the world, you know.'

'I humbly beg your pardon, ma'am,' said Harry. 'But the gentleman was standing just inside the tent while you was playing with them children, and he had a photograph of you in his hand, and as I was standing near I heard him say to Mr. Arnold, "No mistake there." Then they talked a bit more, but you see I wasn't quite close to them, so I only caught a word here and there, nothing to make sense of. But it did seem to me a bit queer as a chap like that should have your likeness, so I tried afterwards to get it out of Arnold who he was, but he snubbed me off and told me nothing. Then I thought, if I'd a

chance, I'd mention the matter to yourself. I don't like to see them snobs going about with your likeness, a lady like you, and a speaking likeness it was. And if Mr. Edwin was here I guess he'd say the same. And if you don't know the chap, I see no sense in it whatever.'

While Harry rambled on Viola stood motionless. His voice quavered a little, and his eyes, very wide open, were fixed upon her with a most bewildered expression. He saw her eyes flash and shine, he saw her face, neck and ears flush crimson, then, as the blood ebbed away, he saw her turn as white as marble. Then she bit her lips, clasped her hands and wrung them.

'What am I to do? Heavens, what am I to do?' she said under her breath. Then she stood quite still, frowning, and it seemed to the old man watching her that she looked ten years older in the course of that minute, so worn and haggard did the young face suddenly become under the pressure of fear and anxiety.

'Don't look like that, Missy!' he cried, trembling. 'What is it, my dear? You've lots of friends. What does that fellow want with you? Come along home with me, my dear, and just wait till he's cleared off. You don't want to see him, I'm sure. He went off along with Mr. Arnold to look at the cricket. Come; I'll let Miss Downes know where you are.'

At first she seemed hardly to hear him. She looked wildly round, first one way, then the other. Then her power of thought, numbed by the shock, came back to her suddenly, and with a quick movement she took old Harry by the hand. His rugged fingers long retained the feeling of that soft young pressure.

'Thank you, thank you,' she said. 'If I have been able to do anything for you, you have repaid it a thousandfold. Now be still more kind, and tell no one, not even Jessie Downes, that you have seen me and told me this, or that I have walked along here with you. Is not there a field path the other side of this hedge?'

'To be sure there is—but—you're going home to Mrs. Downes, Missy?'

'I don't know—at least, I won't tell you—but I must get out of that man's way. Do you mean to say that Mr. Arnold brought him? Oh, how dreadful of him!'

At any other time Harry would have been ready enough to

join in condemning Joseph Arnold, but now he could think of nothing but herself.

'If Mr. Edwin was but here I expect he could help you. You'd tell him what's the matter, and you won't tell me,' he cried wistfully.

'No, nobody can help me,' answered Viola. 'At least, I think not. All you can do is to go home and forget. Listen. If I keep my freedom through the next fortnight, you shall see me again some day. Goodbye. Thank you once more—good-bye.'

She was gone through a gate into the fields, leaving Harry Holt planted there in the lane.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### WITHIN THE WALLS.

'And gave such welcome to the same,  
As might beseem so bright a dame.'

So Colonel Dampier at last met the girl who had lived at his gate all through that long summer. Neither he nor Mrs. Downes was in the least surprised when Firkins came back and announced in a triumphant voice that trembled—'Miss Fairfax.'

Viola followed her rather slowly. She was flushed and agitated ; she looked at Colonel Dampier and hesitated a little, even when he came to meet her both hands outstretched. Then she smiled as she put both hers into them, though her eyes filled suddenly with tears.

'You will think this very extraordinary,' she said. 'You didn't know me, Colonel Dampier, but I have come to ask your advice and your protection. I am in a great difficulty—oh, Mrs. Downes, are you there ?'

'Yes, Missy, I am here,' said Mrs. Downes, standing up.

'Does Colonel Dampier know—anything about me ?' asked the girl, looking again into the old soldier's face, and hardly conscious of the strong grasp in which both her hands were still held.

'I know all about you, Miss Fairfax,' he said. 'To begin with

your father and uncle were two of my subalterns at Burrapore, in the siege. Your uncle, George Fairfax, the bravest boy I ever knew, died in my arms. Your father fortunately lived to fight another day, but, for various reasons, I never saw him after my return to England. I heard of his marriage, however, and of the great inheritance from his grandmother's family. And you are the only representative of all that.'

'Yes, unfortunately,' said the girl. 'And you don't know how often, of late years, I have wished that inheritance drowned in the sea. It has brought such troubles and persecutions! I wish my father had made *you* my guardian, instead of the Marstons!'

'No; I am not the man for that kind of responsibility,' said Colonel Dampier. 'Now tell me—have you seen this detective, or whatever he is? or rather, has he seen you?'

'Yes, he has seen me, and compared me with my photograph, it seems. Mrs. Downes, did you see him? Did he go to the farm?'

'Yes, Missy, I saw him,' Mrs. Downes answered sadly. 'But I soon sent him off my premises, and I don't think Arnold will bring him over again in a hurry. However, as I have been telling the Colonel, the mischief's done, I fear. He has already telegraphed to London that he has traced you, and he talks of Mr. Marston being down to-night.'

Viola made a little exclamation. Then, as Colonel Dampier did not speak, she turned to him again. 'For my father's sake, if you know all the story, take care of me.'

'Of course,' he answered quietly. 'Does any one know you are here?'

'No one. I left Jessie in the tent, in the midst of the tea, and came out for some fresh air. Outside I met Mr. Holt, and he told me about this man—he had seen him at the tent door, and heard him talking to Mr. Arnold. Then I gave myself up for lost, and then I thought of you. Your son knew a little about me, and was so kind—I thought perhaps—so I begged Mr. Holt not to mention having seen me, and I came through the fields straight here.'

'I see,' said Colonel Dampier thoughtfully. 'These people will imagine, Miss Fairfax, that they have the law on their side. How that may be I do not know; but I think this is a case in which we may use some counter strategy. Their tactics have resulted in discovering you in one place. *Digit* We will simply hide

you in another. You shall remain here, and no one shall know that you are here till the 1st of September is past.'

'But is that possible?' cried Viola.

'Everything is possible,' said the Colonel; and he added after a moment, with one of his very rare smiles—'to Firkins and me.'

The housekeeper grinned and rubbed her hands. Such appreciation, and before Mrs. Downes too, was truly pleasant to her.

Poor Mrs. Downes was not so happy.

'But what am I to say—what am I to do?' she asked, looking from one to the other. 'Think what a way Jessie will be in at losing Miss Field—I beg your pardon, Miss Fairfax. I shall have to tell Jessie.'

'Yes, you must tell Jessie—only she had better not come here, I suppose,' said Viola. She crossed the room to Mrs. Downes, and took her hand caressingly. 'Dear Mrs. Downes, you know all now, but I hope you are not angry with me or with Jessie. I felt it was better to tell only one person everything—can't you understand that? Besides, it seemed less responsibility for you.'

'I would have borne it, Missy,' said the old woman, looking her in the face.

'You can bear it now, Mrs. Downes,' said Colonel Dampier. 'If your daughter has kept a secret from you, you can now keep one from her. She must be the last person to know that Miss Fairfax is in this house.'

'Oh, sir! but Jessie will be deperate.'

'But, Colonel Dampier, Jessie is entirely to be trusted.'

These remonstrances were made at the same moment by Mrs. Downes and Viola.

'I believe,' said the Colonel, 'Miss Downes is engaged to be married to Mr. Arnold.'

'Worse luck, yes! and I wish she would break it off,' said Mrs. Downes passionately.

'As long as it is not broken off Miss Downes must not be trusted with a secret that Mr. Arnold would give a good deal to know. It is unfair on one and the other, even if there were no better reason. Mrs. Downes, you must go home and hold your tongue.'

'And hear and see nothing of Missy!' said Mrs. Downes with a half sob.

'It is for Missy's sake, as you call her,' said the Colonel gently. 'She will be safe here, and it is only for a fortnight; go home, and leave her to me.'

'And what am I to say to Jessie?'

'You can let her talk and say nothing.'

'And about Missy's things—I must send them to her.'

'You must do nothing of the kind. Mrs. Firkins will provide Miss Fairfax with everything she wants. Now go home, Mrs. Downes, for your daughter must find you there.'

His manner was so commanding in its quietness that Mrs. Downes at once prepared to go, though her eyes swam so that she could hardly find her way across the room. Viola sprang to her, took her arm, and led her to the door. There she threw her arms round the old woman's neck and kissed her affectionately.

'Dear Mrs. Downes, I'm so sorry. But it is only for a fortnight. I shall never, never forget that you were my first friend, you know. I mustn't send my love to Jessie, but I love you both with all my heart, and always shall—you know that, don't you?'

'Yes, Missy, I know. Goodbye, my dear, goodbye!'

Firkins came forward with an air of grim satisfaction, and led Mrs. Downes sobbing along the hall.

Viola turned back into the library, and seeing that Colonel Dampier was busy at his desk walked across to the window and stood there, looking out on the rather burnt and neglected garden. Even the rooks were silent, and the tall firs above the river stood motionless against the grey sky. It was not a cheerful view at that moment, and the young fugitive turned round and looked dreamily at the room in which she found herself: so bare, so comfortless; the white-haired master stooping there; and on the wall above his head that portrait, which startled her with its likeness to young Edwin in his sadder moods.

She caught herself wishing that Edwin, her eager champion, was here now; and yet she might have been more surprised than pleased to know that the Colonel was writing a telegram to Switzerland containing the two words 'Come home.'

As he lifted his head and looked at the girl standing there he said in his heart, 'God forgive me if I am doing wrong; but I can't manage this without him.'

The message was sent off, and Edwin, travelling day and night, reached Tarringford late on the afternoon of the second day. His one idea was that his father must be ill, but he inquired of the stationmaster and at the post-office, and could hear no bad news of Stepford Hall. Preferring his own legs to those of Tarringford horses, he left his small luggage and started to walk home by the short way across the fields.

It was a grey, dreary afternoon ; the country looked flat, the distance thick and rainy ; the river, always rather low towards the end of the summer, rolled slowly and dismally between the shaven meadows. It all made a strange contrast with the sunny, joyous world, full of life and loveliness, through which he and Viola had glided together not many weeks ago. Edwin found it hard to believe that the two landscapes were the same.

He had not gone far beyond the bridge, and was thinking, half joyfully, half in fear, that as this path led through the Slang, there was at least a faint chance of meeting her—Viola, who, impossible dream as she might be, had never left his thoughts since he went away—when at a sharp turn beyond the first stile he found himself face to face with Joseph Arnold.

Coming home from abroad a traveller's heart generally finds a little warmth for any old acquaintance. Edwin had disliked Arnold heartily enough before he went away as a vulgar, greedy, hard-hearted person. Now he appeared to him more in the light of an old neighbour, a connection of Mrs. Downes and Jessie ; besides all this, a man who could certainly give him news of his father. It was with quite unusual cordiality of manner that he stopped and held out his hand.

'How are you, Mr. Arnold ? How is everybody——'

He broke off, astonished beyond words at Arnold's appearance. The man looked red and sulky ; his hat was pulled over his eyes. He hardly seemed to know Edwin, staring at him blankly for a moment ; then with a sort of grunt, not noticing the offered hand, he pushed passed him—literally, for the path was narrow—and walked on at a great pace towards Tarringford.

Edwin's heart almost stood still with the apprehension of he knew not what. In old days he had often been disgusted with Arnold's pompous attempts at friendliness. What could this extraordinary change of manner mean ? Something serious

must have happened, but what? Could some terrible news really be lying in wait for him at the end of his journey?—some news that Arnold knew and would not tell him? Perhaps Mrs. Downes was dead. Such an event as that would be quite enough to make his father send for him.

He ran through several fields and bits of green lane, at last checking his pace when he could see the roofs and chimneys of the farm. Along the last stretch of lane, where the gate opened from the public foot-path into the home field, a woman was walking very slowly, her head bent, her shoulders shaken with violent sobbing. Long before he came up with her, Edwin knew that this woman was Jessie Downes, and the sight, which distressed him very much, confirmed the idea that Mr. Arnold's manner had suggested to him. At first he doubted whether it would be kind to overtake her; then suddenly came the unreasoning thought, like a flash from heaven, 'It may be Viola!' After that two steps brought him to Jessie's side.

She started, for he had been walking on the soft turf, and she was not aware of his presence till he said, 'Miss Jessie!' Then she controlled herself with a sudden effort, dried her eyes, choked down her sobs, and smiled as she held out her hand to him.

'Oh, Mr. Edwin, where have you dropped from?' she exclaimed. 'You have heard, I suppose?'

'Heard what? Not your mother?' said the young man eagerly. 'My father sent for me. It's not himself, is it? Or—it can't be—but why are you crying?'

'I've no business to cry; it's only because I'm weak and silly,' said the girl, drawing herself up, and setting her mouth into a curiously hard expression. 'Not but what there's plenty to cry about—but there are better things to do, I suppose. Mother don't cry; she sits like a stone. Would you believe it, they've been dragging the river. But she wouldn't drown herself, would she now, do you think?'

'For God's sake, what do you mean? Remember that I know nothing. Are you talking of *her*?'

'Who else?' said Jessie drearily. 'Let go my hand, please; you hurt.'

'I beg your pardon. But will you tell me? I know nothing, remember.'

Edwin pulled himself together and went quietly through that awful dream, as it seemed to him afterwards. Jessie told



the story without much emotion ; all her tears had already been wept, perhaps, for that cause or another. She told how Viola had disappeared unaccountably from Stepford on the Feast day, having, no doubt, from some unknown means, become aware of the stranger who was watching her. She was going into some explanation as to Viola's story, but Edwin hastily told her that he knew all that, and she did not inquire how. She went on to tell how Mr. Marston, the 'horridest man she ever saw,' had come down with two other men, a lawyer and a second detective, she thought ; how furious he had been at finding that his father's ward had slipped through his fingers once again ; how he had tried to cross-examine her mother and herself, till 'mother told him a bit of her mind, and I was that mad I nearly flew at him ;' how these two days had been spent by these men and the Tarringford police in searching every corner of the neighbourhood for the vanished girl.

'Anyhow, it seems she has escaped him,' said Edwin. 'But where can she be ?'

'Ah, that's the question. That puzzles me more than enough. There wasn't time for her to get far away, you see. She didn't go off by train, for, of course, they've inquired at the stations. But the river—oh, you don't think that's possible, do you, Mr. Edwin ?'

'No, I don't ; I can't,' said the young man. 'She must have got away somehow. I am sure she has. No—no, she's too good—— Do you know, I think you had better be patient. If you helped to find her now, you might not be doing her a kindness.'

'Well, I've said that to myself, too,' sighed Jessie. 'Only it breaks my heart that she should have gone off like this, without a word to me. I know why that was, though. It was somebody I trusted, Mr. Edwin, you see, who brought that man to the house—somebody I advised her to trust, too. But he'll never have the chance of betraying my secrets any more, or of keeping them, either.'

'Do you mean——'

'I mean that my engagement is broken off, Mr. Edwin, and I'm glad you should hear it from myself, and from no one else,' said the girl.

'Well—I'm sorry—and yet—I never thought him worthy of you, Miss Jessie.'

'He has his good and bad points, like all of us, Jessie answered, and her voice became once more uncertain, and her eyes dim with tears. 'Don't let us mention him any more, please,' she added, 'but I'm glad you should know.'

After that there seemed nothing more to say. Edwin could not help poor Jessie in her own affairs, and there was no use in standing there discussing the loss of Viola. He must find her, if he had to search the world, and though her flight was no business of his ; but he did not say that to Jessie.

He left her, promising to come and see Mrs. Downes very soon, and hurried on along the hollow way. It was now rather a puzzling question—why had his father sent for him so suddenly? Had these Marstons annoyed him in any way? or was it for some other cause, unconnected with Viola?

The garden door was locked. It was not necessary, however, for the young master to go round to the front gates. He hurried on to the end of the wall, and after a short cut across the corner of the park, climbed the fence of a shrubbery, and crossed the lawn and the broad gravel sweep to the south colonnade. He tried the front door ; it was fastened too, a most strange thing at Stepford Hall. He waited a moment ; inside the hall Don barked noisily—a bark of joy, for he knew his master was there, and scratched at the door with his paw. Then it seemed that somebody called him, and he ran away, whining a little. Then there was dead silence in and about the old house. Edwin raised his hand to the bell ; then changed his mind and went round into the garden. But even the library windows were shut, and the curtains were drawn partly over them.

There seemed to be somebody moving in the room, however ; and in a moment, as Edwin came close to the window and knocked, Don bounced across the room in a still wilder excitement, and leaped against the glass. After an instant's delay the curtain was drawn back, the window was opened, and Viola Fairfax stood smiling on the threshold.

'What, you! You—you here!' Edwin stammered out, almost dizzy with the shock of astonishment and joy.

She held out her hand without speaking ; he caught and held it as if he never meant to let it go, and the sudden passion in his eyes brought a lovely colour to her face, paler and thinner than he remembered it.

But that golden moment was over immediately. Edwin

remembered everything, and felt himself falling back into despair. Not that she said, or did, or looked anything discouraging. Her manner was perfectly sweet and natural, after the slight confusion of meeting—only too natural, indeed. It brought Edwin to his senses, and in a minute more he had almost forgotten his own hopeless state, realising that he could only serve her by unselfishness.

‘Shut the window, please,’ she said, ‘and speak to your poor dog.’

Edwin obeyed mechanically. She sat down in his own old chair, and he stood opposite to her ; it seemed at the moment impossible to speak, and Don’s violent demonstrations were a kind of refuge.

‘I am so sorry you have come home,’ said Viola gently ; but somehow her eyes contradicted her words. ‘I was really angry with your father when he told me he had sent for you. It was too bad to spoil your holiday for the sake of my unfortunate affairs.’

‘I had not an idea why he sent for me. But I am awfully glad he did,’ murmured Edwin. ‘Nobody knows, then—he is hiding you here from these people——’

‘Do you know——’

‘Yes ; I saw Jessie Downes just now, in despair, and she told me everything. It really must be breaking her heart and Mrs. Downes’s. She has broken off with Arnold—did you know that ?’

‘No—has she ? Oh, poor Jessie !’ cried Viola. ‘Oh, I am not worth all this dreadful trouble. And yet—he was not good enough for Jessie, was he ?’

‘I always thought him a horrid fellow. Jessie will get over it—it will be a good thing in the end. But Mrs. Downes—poor dear——’

‘Oh, Mr. Dampier, you don’t know all yet. There are labyrinths in this story. I really begin to feel quite wicked for upsetting households in this way. All the consequence of that advertisement. Poor Jessie ! she did care for him, you know, good or bad. But there is one little comfort—Mrs. Downes won’t break her heart—no, she knows all, but Colonel Dampier insisted on her keeping it from Jessie. Dear old thing, I shall have her to stay with me at Northley some day, when I am my own mistress.’

‘But you—I am thinking about you,’ Edwin broke in

rather impatiently. 'Are you comfortable here? Nobody to wait on you but Firkins!'

They both laughed, Edward nervously, Viola quite merrily, but her answer was earnest.

'Never was a besieged castle so luxurious. Your father is the most wonderful commander-in-chief—and you don't know, I think, that my father and uncle fought by his side at Burrapore. That is a great link between him and me. And then—I cannot let you speak disrespectfully of that treasure Firkins. She was brought up by my grandmother.'

'Ah! she does her best, I daresay. When she saw you first she was full of the likeness.'

'Yes—that was very funny,' said Viola.

For a minute or two both were silent. Edwin was trying—it was difficult enough, in her presence—to think things over, and to grasp the whole situation. She, perhaps, found the silence a little risky, for she presently began to ask him about Switzerland. And there they talked like two people on the most ordinary terms, not at all as if the one was a hunted fugitive in that country with a reward of a thousand pounds offered for her, the other a young penniless man desperately in love with her, till Colonel Dampier came suddenly into the room.

His eyes were anxious and stern as he glanced from one to the other; he greeted Edwin rather coolly, and asked why he did not come into the house the right way.

'You should have rung at the front door,' he said. 'This window was fastened, or ought to have been.'

'It was bolted, but I opened it for Mr. Dampier,' said Viola.

'Very kind of you,' said the Colonel with a slight bow. 'My son must learn, however, that we are in a state of siege. No unauthorised exits and entrances permitted. We will not put him under arrest this time, as he knew nothing about it. Go and smarten yourself up, Ned, and get something to eat. You look like a famished wolf out of the jungle.'

Edwin's sunburnt complexion deepened considerably. His father was probably right; and here, in his unwashed condition, after two days and nights of hard travelling, he had been entertaining Miss Fairfax without a thought of his very appearance. Also he suddenly became aware that he had never been so hungry in his life. He left the room without a word.

'You are rather cruel, Colonel Dampier,' said Viola. 'I was thinking how well your son looked.'

'You are very good, Miss Fairfax, but Edwin has a serious fault—he has no vanity.'

'Oh ! is that a fault ?' said Viola ; and then she leaned back and gazed thoughtfully out of the window, while the Colonel took up his papers.

Her mouth was smiling a little, and her brown eyes looked soft and dreamy ; but nobody saw this, not even old Don, who had followed his master.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### FORBIDDEN.

*'Mais je la vois, ma bien-aimée,  
Qui sourit sans m'appartenir.'*

WHEN Edwin reappeared in the library his father was alone ; not working at his desk, but pacing the room with folded arms and a curious intensity of look that his son had hardly ever seen before. Edwin stood and watched him for a minute or two, and then the silence became impossible.

'Well, father, you sent for me,' the young fellow broke out suddenly.

'I did,' said Colonel Dampier. 'A duty was thrust upon me which I could not refuse to perform. I thought my fighting days were over, when I found myself the protector and champion of a distressed lady. Well, no soldier worth the name ever refused to draw his sword for a woman in trouble, and in this case the cause appears almost more than righteous. You remember, Ned, our talk one night of Miss Fairfax—Miss Field, as she then called herself, poor girl—but I think you knew even then that this was not her true name.'

'Yes,' said Edwin. 'The first time that I met Miss Fairfax she told me her true name, and why she was hiding herself. Since then—since I left home, in fact—I have accidentally found out all the rest.'

'Did you hear that her father, before he came into the title, was a subaltern of mine at Burrapore ?'

'No ; at least, she told me just now.'

'He was a fine young fellow, but never very wise, which he showed by the guardians he gave his daughter. I once knew Marston slightly—the soldier. A thick-skinned, unprincipled man, hated by his men for his harshness and insolence. I believe his elder brother was even a worse kind of man; that is, he was weakly, instead of strongly unprincipled. From what Miss Fairfax has done me the honour to tell me, Sir Henry Marston's son inherits the faults of his father and his uncle. Now, Ned, I should be inclined to let these men know that the girl is under my roof, and to defy them to do their worst, but I think they might legally demand custody of her person. She thinks so too. No doubt there are higher powers to whom she might appeal; but it is now not a fortnight to the 1st of September, which ends her troubles. If they succeeded in getting hold of her, even for these few days, there is hardly any limit to what their unscrupulousness might bring about. Do you know that Miss Fairfax is a great heiress, Ned?'

'I do—yes.'

'Did you know that when you and I were talking of her, the night before you went away?'

'No, father. I took up a paper in London that told the whole story, what I knew and what I did not know.' He paused, and then went on hurriedly, 'That was why I went abroad.'

'How do you mean?' said the Colonel sharply.

'You remember what you said—that I could not marry, and had better not meet her again,' his son answered, very low. 'And you remember that I would not promise not to meet her again; it was impossible for me to make such a promise. I suppose I had some sort of hope, in spite of what you said, and though I had *no* reason for it. But as soon as I knew everything, of course I saw that I must not meet her again. You were right, you see.'

Edwin had sat down, and was leaning his head on his hand in a rather depressed way; but there was no note of complaint in his voice; he was merely stating facts which were like life or death, plain and inevitable.

Colonel Dampier looked at him, then walked up to him and laid his hand on his head.

'Circumstances have not changed, my boy,' he said.

'Of course not.'

'I knew what I was doing when I sent for you, Ned. I wanted to see you first, and to have things clearly understood. I wanted your help through this business, and I knew that your view of honour would be the same as mine. You will feel yourself as far removed from Miss Fairfax as if she were a daughter of the Queen.'

'I shall, sir.'

But it was a difficult undertaking, for Miss Fairfax, very naturally, depended for companionship, for amusement, for everything beyond the ministrations of Firkins, on the youngest person in the house, her host's son. Her manner to him was unfailingly sweet and kind. She showed him none of those humours and caprices that Jessie Downes had learnt to know, but was like the Viola of that afternoon on the river, a princess and a very gracious one, friendly, confiding, sympathetic. If she had had any unkind thoughts of Edwin after he went away so suddenly, they were now forgotten; or perhaps she was not far from understanding why he had gone, and therefore had forgiven him. But the more angelic was she, the harder became Edwin's task.

Colonel Dampier saw it well enough; and there was a new ring in his voice as he read his favourite prayer for 'Thy servants who fight for righteousness.' It might seem a small thing to some people, this ordeal of Edwin's, but his father knew that it was enough to call out all the heroic elements in the young man's character.

The only way in which Edwin showed his state of struggle and warfare was by the loss of his old light-heartedness. To be sure, he had always been rather quiet and grave; but underneath all that there used to be a certain boyish happiness. He had never before been face to face with a stern reality of disappointment. There was one thing he cared for with his whole heart: day by day the empire of that one thing became more absolute. Sometimes it almost seemed, in that atmosphere of sweet friendliness, as if he might have it for the asking: then duty and honour reminded him that to ask was impossible. He tried to live on the thought that few men were fortunate enough to be able to serve their ideals as he was serving Viola; but the comfort was cold. And the graver he became—for his trial grew harder day by day—the sweeter became Viola.

Colonel Dampier's orders were strict, that his charge should not show herself outside the walls of the house; but after a

day or two, as she was pining for fresh air, he consented to her walking up and down a path in the walled kitchen-garden at the back. Unfortunately the strawberries were over, but there were apricots and peaches, which Edwin gathered for her. These walks were only allowed in the evening, after the garden men had gone away. She was so effectually hidden in the large old house that only the actual house servants, Firkins, Locke, and a very quiet cook and housemaid quite under Firkins' command, knew that she was there.

All the curiosities of the house, packed away since Edwin was born—pictures, books, china, quaint furniture, Indian relics—were overhauled to amuse the prisoner. Firkins, a changed being, bustled about with a smile on her face and a duster in her hand, and grudged no trouble in opening cupboards and cabinets, diving into chests, mounting on steps to uncover some precious old family picture. The Dampier possessions had a fine time in those days, and the old Squire, who had collected many of them, would have been vastly pleased to see them appreciated by a person whom he would have admired as much as his grandson did. The daughter-in-law he had never known had not cared much for these things.

Once Firkins was a little indiscreet. She was busy at one of the drawing-room cabinets, bringing out treasures of Oriental china to amuse Viola, who was sitting close by in an old brocaded armchair, uncovered in her honour. The shutters of course were open, and the afternoon sun was streaming across the room. Edwin came in, and Firkins scrambled to her feet.

'Here I am, basking in the sun in this lovely room, and being shown all sorts of beautiful things,' said Viola, looking up at him.

'You like the room? I am glad; I have always liked it,' Edwin said. 'But I am never allowed to have the shutters open—am I, Firkins?'

The old woman laughed and shook her head.

'There'd have been no colour left in carpet nor nothing, if you had had your way,' she said. 'I've had a lot of trouble keeping things nice. There was one afternoon Mr. Edwin came in, ma'am, and threw all the shutters open, and when I ventured to say a word he up and said that a lady would like them so, he was sure. I was a bit surprised, as no ladies ever



came here, but afterwards I found he'd been out walking with *you* !'

'That was prophetic, for I certainly do like them so,' said Viola, laughing, while Edwin frowned.

Firkins saw that she had displeased him, and chuckled privately. Edwin was glad that she remembered something she must do and went away almost immediately. But when she was gone Violet did not find him a very cheerful companion.

His father told him two days after his return that he might as well go out and about as usual. It might seem strange to the people, he said, if he only came home to shut himself up. As yet Tarringford's and Stepford's wholesome awe of 'the Colonel' had protected the Hall from search, or even inquiry. The only thing Sir Henry Marston's people had done, and this by letter, was to ask leave to drag the river, which had at once been given. Colonel Dampier was regarded as a fierce old solitary by all those who did not know him well, and Mr. Arnold took upon himself to declare that he had never seen or taken any interest in Miss Fairfax. There had been, to be sure, a little acquaintance between her and young Dampier, but he had gone abroad suddenly and nothing more had come of it.

'Of course I knew nothing about the young lady at that time,' said Arnold to Mr. Marston. 'One day, though, I happened to be crossing the bridge, and saw them in his boat together, and then I did think there might be something in it.'

'Ah ! Did you ?' said Mr. Marston. He had a habit of speaking through his teeth and showing them a little, which had increased upon him during these days of excitement. 'What sort of a fellow is he, this young Dampier ?'

'Not a bad-looking young chap, if he could be smartened up a bit. They think no end of themselves, these Dampiers. Yes, sir, I quite thought something was up, and then, when he went off suddenly, I thought the young lady must have given him the sack.'

Mr. Marston cursed Dampier's impudence, and somehow made Mr. Arnold feel that he and his own remarks shared the same fate.

He went away rather sulky. It was hard enough, in consequence of the girl's new and most mysterious disappearance, to have lost his very fair chance of a few hundred pounds ;

he felt himself far too good a man to be insulted by Mr. Marston. He began to be almost sorry that he had not let the whole business alone. The loss of Jessie made him more miserable than he would have chosen to confess; he could hardly believe in it. He revenged himself on the world in general by writing a sharp letter to poor old Harry Holt, warning him that he could not wait for his money beyond the 3rd of September.

'She's gone off, and her promises\* too,' he said to himself. 'I was a bit of a fool not to take that two hundred. But I won't be done out of my money amongst them all, I promise them.'

Edwin's first walk was to the Slang Farm, and he went laden with messages from Miss Fairfax to Mrs. Downes. She had written to her, but by Colonel Dampier's advice she tore up the letter. Edwin was rather bored, when he arrived at the farm, by finding three people sitting in the kitchen—Mrs. Downes, Jessie, and old Harry Holt, a most rare visitor. He had come down, full of anxiety, to ask if anything had been heard of the young lady. Jessie, in her state of restless misery, was ready to talk of all the possibilities. Mrs. Downes sat in her corner, silent and stony; it was Harry's opinion that she took it 'desperate hard.' She did not seem to wish to talk of her late guest, or to speak at all for that matter. The clever and agreeable Mrs. Downes was a changed woman. As for Jessie and Harry, they talked with the tears running down their faces, while she told him a good deal about Miss Fairfax that he had not known before. But she made no allusion, then or afterwards, to Viola's intention of paying his debts.

'Well, Miss Downes,' said Harry, 'it beats me, the whole thing do. She's left these parts, that's plain. *You'd* be sure to know where she was, if anybody did. But these folks, you meet 'em on every side; and if they ain't asking questions they're posting up great bills offering a thousand pounds reward for information about the young lady. They're on every post and wall about Stepford, and Tarringford too, they tell me. A thousand pound—that's a big sum—ain't it, Mrs. Downes?'

'A very big sum, Mr. Holt,' answered Mrs. Downes absently.

'Ay, I should be a happy and a free man if I was worth

that,' said Harry, with a deep sigh. He looked at Jessie, and delicately refrained from saying more; for he had heard a report that her engagement to Arnold was broken off. In his heart he would have liked to congratulate her, but his manners were too good.

'Ah! It might be easy earned if I could tell 'em where she was,' he said with a sigh.

On which Mrs. Downes turned round upon him like a dragon, as he afterwards told Miss Maria, and said—'If you could, Mr. Holt, you wouldn't, I suppose?'

'Well, mother, of course he wouldn't!' said Jessie, for the old man was almost too much frightened to answer.

'Well, Miss, I hope you're right,' he said, smiling. 'Perish the money, I say, and so does Maria. The workhouse with a good conscience would be better than a big balance meanly gained.'

'What's that about the workhouse, Mr. Holt?' said Edwin Dampier's voice at the door.

'Oh, sir, I was only alluding to my poor troubles, and it ain't a subject for society,' said Harry. 'But it's pleasant to see you back again.'

As for Mrs. Downes, her whole face beamed as she rose to welcome the young Squire. Their eyes met, and they smiled at each other; and they told each other a good deal in the clasp of their hands. Edwin sat down near her, and, rather to Harry's surprise, he did not allude to the subject which was filling all their minds, but began to give a long and detailed account of his adventures in Switzerland. Mrs. Downes listened placidly, and even asked questions. Jessie, her mind full of grief and impatience, felt a deeper degree of surprise. She was almost angry with her mother and Edwin. What could it matter about the height of this or that mountain? She knew and cared nothing about the dangers and the attractions of a glacier; she had not even any clear idea what a glacier was like. She wondered at Mr. Edwin; she could not understand him, after their meeting two days before. Viola's disappearance grew every day more mysterious; and here he was quite cheerful and easy, talking to her mother about mountains! And her mother listening as if she had nothing else to think about: but then her mother had always been rather foolish about Mr. Edwin.

Presently her impatience became too strong for her man-

ners, and she started from her chair, interrupting one of Edwin's adventures in the snow.

'Mother, I'm going to make Mr. Holt a cup of tea after his walk.'

'Do, Jessie,' said Mrs. Downes; and she too rose. 'Mr. Edwin,' she said, 'will you take a turn with me in the garden? There's something I want to show you, if you please.'

What could it be? Jessie wondered, as Edwin instantly followed Mrs. Downes out of the kitchen. But then, as Harry Holt's round blue eyes followed her from the fireplace to the cupboard, it suddenly struck her that her mother had not wished to discuss the most interesting of subjects with Mr. Edwin before him. This thought commended itself to Jessie's sense of propriety, nice old man though he was; and she felt less severe as she went on with the tea-making.

The other two paced the garden together for a long time.

'Well, Mr. Edwin, dear,' the old woman ventured at last to say, 'I wish I could arrange this world after my liking. I know what would happen next.'

'All sorts of impossibilities, I expect,' said Edwin quietly; and somehow she did not venture to explain herself.

Harry Holt enjoyed his tea, over which he lingered so long that he was still sitting in the kitchen when the young Squire and Mrs. Downes came back. It so happened that he and Edwin started together on their way home. As they walked Harry asked anxiously for Edwin's opinion on the disappearance of Miss Fairfax, but got no satisfactory answer. In fact it seemed to him that the young Squire was quite shockingly indifferent on the subject, and he was too loyal to excite his interest by telling him of his adventure at the Feast, of the photograph, and his last sight of her. Not a creature knew of this, and never would, from Harry. Edwin was a little roused, however, by his talk of the posters and the reward.

'I should like to catch them sticking their rubbish on any of our walls,' he said; but then he instantly changed the subject and began asking Harry about his own affairs.

This brought upon him a story which lasted nearly all the way home: Harry's first despair, Miss Fairfax's comforting words, Mr. Arnold's leniency, and now his renewed demands.

'I doubt I've somehow been expecting a miracle,' said Harry, looking up into his companion's face with quaint earnestness. 'She was such a wonderful young lady, and

talked like a fairy in a story-book. But it don't pay to believe in women, does it, sir ?'

'I don't know. Miss Fairfax said she believed everything would be settled ?'

'Them was her words. And she said something good would happen to me in September.'

'Then if I were you I shouldn't despair yet. But are not you too proud, Harry, to let a lady pay your debts for you ?'

'Well, no, I ain't proud at all, Mr. Edwin. Maria, she says I'm a grovelling earthworm, but I tell her that in this life we must take what we can get, and be thankful. Besides, if she did, speaking seriously, it would be a loan, you know. I never did quite think of her doing that, though.'

'I expect she meant to do that, if anything. It wouldn't be much good to you, changing one creditor for another. As you haven't any pride, your pocket will hold it easily. Wait a bit, Harry, September isn't come yet.'

'No, but where is she ? Dead, for all we know.'

'Dead !' Edwin repeated the word, and actually laughed, cutting viciously at the hedge with his stick. 'If Miss Fairfax is dead, I'll pay the money for you—so there, Harry ! In the meanwhile, why don't you try and earn it yourself ? Then you can set up some pride again.'

'How am I to earn it, sir ?'

'Why, find her, and claim that thousand pounds.'

'Well, I mentioned that at the Slang just now, and verily I thought Mrs. Downes would have bitten my head off.'

Edwin laughed again.

'Hallo ! What's this ?' he said.

A turn in the path under the wall brought them in sight of the garden door. There stood a man busily engaged in sticking a large bill on the door itself. A bundle of bills lay on the step at his feet. He looked like some sort of official. Close by, watching his proceedings, stood a young, well-dressed man, pale and thin, with a long moustache, which he was constantly twisting, and singularly disagreeable eyes. Edwin knew the man by instinct at the first glance. All his fighting blood was alive at once ; but he addressed himself to the bill-sticker, and spoke very quietly.

'May I ask by whose orders you are doing that ?'

The man looked up rather startled. His manner was civil enough, but he answered Edwin's question by another.

'Is there any objection, sir? It is a convenient place——'

'Are you doing it by Colonel Dampier's orders?'

'Well—no, sir.'

He turned to his companion, who was standing against the palings on the other side of the path. Edwin also looked at this man, who raised his eyes slowly, and stared at him deliberately from head to foot.

'We don't know this gentleman,' he said in low and lazy tones, his inspection ended. 'Get on with your work, Thomas.'

'Take off that bill at once, please,' said Edwin, 'and do not touch that door again, or this wall, or any part of Colonel Dampier's premises.'

There was a pause. Edwin looked at the bill-sticker, and he looked at his employer, who stood with an unconcerned air, slowly twisting his moustache. Harry Holt, in the background, stared at the group with a terrified interest.

'Did you hear me?' said Edwin.

'Pardon me,' interrupted the other man, smiling, 'but we really don't know who you are, sir, or what right you have to give orders here.'

'It is true; I should have introduced myself,' said Edwin coolly.

'My name is Dampier. I think I am speaking to Mr. Marston.'

'You are right. And now will you kindly explain yourself? Why do you object to these bills being posted here? You probably don't know the circumstances—not correctly, at any rate—and you are doing a curiously disobliging thing.'

'I beg your pardon—I do know the circumstances—and therefore I have very good reason for what I am doing.'

'You don't wish to be of any use in restoring Miss Fairfax to her friends? Are you aware that we think her hardly responsible for her actions—that she has disappeared a second time, and that it is impossible to know what hands she may have fallen into. This new vanishing would seem unaccountable, but that we know she was always subject to freaks. From what I hear your own experience confirms that. Easily bored—unnaturally so. You went away, Mr. Dampier—but then, it seems, you came back again. And the bird took flight. I don't know if the two things happened simultaneously—if so, of course one understands how you feel about it.

But, after all, that is no reason why you should try to hinder her legal guardians from finding her. It seems like a little exhibition of ill-temper. You are very young. Some day you will learn not to indulge in that sort of thing when it is useless.'

Edwin afterwards wondered how he had let Mr. Marston go on so long. Though he really did not understand all he said, or take in the full insolence of his hints, the words stung like sharp cuts from a whip. His fingers tightened on his stick, and his whole self seemed strung into one longing to punish this odious, drawling dandy there on the spot for all his sins. But he restrained himself. After all, who had the best of it?

'I don't know what you are talking about,' he said. 'I don't wish to argue with you. I say that these bills are not to be stuck up on our premises. That is all.'

'Country manners—I see!' muttered Augustus Marston between his teeth. 'Proverbially disobliging and unreasonable. Well, what are you doing?' very sharply to his companion. 'Take that bill off the door: you hear what Mr. Dampier says.'

The man at once obeyed. Edwin stood over him sternly till it was done, then took a key out of his pocket and unlocked the door, touched his hat to Mr. Marston, stepped inside, and shut and locked it after him.

'Lout!' Augustus Marston went on muttering. 'No danger there, anyhow! Better taste than that—unless she is quite mad by this time. Come on, Thomas.'

Then his eyes fell on old Harry, who could not tear himself away, and still stood staring in the path, with the idiotic expression that it pleased him to assume at times.

'Would you like to earn five shillings, my man?' he said to him after a casual glance.

The old man pursed up his mouth, and his apple cheeks became redder. What did this nasty gentleman take him for? he wondered—in his best coat, too! But a moment's thought made him answer civilly—'Well, sir—if I could do it honest.'

'Here you are. Two half-crowns. Take a score of these bills and scatter them in the neighbourhood. Give them to your neighbours—make your wife show them to her friends. Stick them about the cottages—leave one wherever you go. Do you see—a thousand pounds reward! And a good action—to find a young lady who is lost.'

'Ay—I see,' said Harry, with a stolid air. 'Thank you, sir.'

He trotted on across the fields with a serious countenance, and the roll of bills under his arm. When he came to the brook he made a little hole in the muddy bank and dropped the two half-crowns in.

'That's spoiling the Philistines,' he chuckled. 'But we won't touch the unclean thing.'

When he got home he fetched a spade and buried the bills in a corner of the garden. Having done this, he stood a minute in meditation over their grave. He thought over the strange things he had seen and heard that afternoon, and among these was the locking of Stepford Hall garden door. He suddenly and violently slapped his leg, then sent his hat spinning in the air.

'Whatever's the matter?' cried the voice of Miss Maria across the garden. 'Is the man mad?'

'Oh no, Maria, only a bit cheerful,' said Harry, as he turned round and went to meet her. 'I've seen Mr. Edwin, and Mrs. Downes gave me ever such a good tea.'

'But that's no reason for prancing like a Merry-Andrew! an old man like you.'

'I can't feel my years in that pertinacious sort of way, Maria, and you oughtn't to wish it. I'll be young while I can.'

'I hope it ain't your second childhood!' said Miss Maria. 'To get that excited on a talk and a cup of tea—well, I'm glad it was nothing stronger. And have they found the young lady yet?'

'Not a bit of it,' said Harry.

*(To be continued.)*



## *THE GROWTH OF A GREAT FREE LIBRARY.*

---

'I WAS born in the palace library,' said the little mouse who wished to be a poet ; and in order to become one she ate up the ant-queen to obtain 'understanding,' and a whole series of novels to acquire 'sentiment.' They were well-read novels, thumbed and greasy, which made them somewhat easier of digestion ; and one mentally thanks the author for not harrowing one's feelings by giving the mouse a priceless manuscript or unpublished poem for her meal.

But though this little aspirant to poetry spared greater works in her search for the lightest diet, yet how many enemies there are that threaten the frail life of a rare book ! Not only Khalif Omar, burning the Alexandrian library with his curt alternative : 'harmful, or else superfluous !'—not only the ravages of customary, habitual warfare upon houses of learning and religion—but students even, who cannot live without books, act towards them as a perpetual menace. Edward III.'s chancellor, the excellent Richard de Bury, lamented that his scholars at Durham would treat their volumes with so little care ; 'some,' he added in a climax of indignation, 'will even dry flowers between the leaves !'—forgetting, in his passionless episcopate, that even a book-worm knows the month of May. If, however, the old town-library of Frankfort is a fair specimen, few book-worms allowed the sap of the merry spring-time to penetrate their writings ; and the intrusion of a pressed heartsease or may-blossom might seem allowable, if elsewhere as well as there the books collected consisted only of theology and law.

The ancient cities of Europe have each a personality of its own, unlike the manufacturing mushrooms of our day. Their growth is not the haphazard multiplying of a fungus, but an orderly, instinctive increase round the central fibre of the

whole. The Frankfort of Charlemagne's day occupied perhaps two hundred acres, instead of the four or five square miles she now covers, but she has always been a sort of inland Tyre, and still holds her head high, though fallen under the Prussian yoke. 'Thank Heaven I am no Prussian !' said a lady the other day ; 'I was born free—that is, born before '68.' For at least a thousand years Frankfort held the balance between surrounding States, and bought the friendship of monarchs at a rate which to poorer cities would have seemed dear. That mysterious glamour which hangs about the 'Holy Roman Empire' of the Middle Ages clothes with romance and interest her unique heirlooms—the crimson room in the 'Roman Hall' where the great princes deliberated, and the chapel in which they chose the emperor ; the balcony from which the newly chosen ruler showed himself to the people, and the 'Golden Bull'—the parchment with its gold seal attached—which promised that the election should take place within her walls.

The 'Free City' trafficked with the emperors—it chaffered even with Popes—its fairs were the great mart for all the neighbouring countries. 'The very paving stones sweat commerce,' says a critic of the last century—surely a detractor, for the remains of many beautiful religious buildings show that the citizens knew how to give as well as get. Piety, not commerce, must have carved the beautiful group over the south-west door of 'Our dear Lady's' Church, and the rich Calvaire at the north-end of the cathedral ; and probably grateful devotion for some holy deaths adorned the graceful convent church of the 'Whiteladies,' with an interesting *tempera* painting of 'the three resurrections,' representing the disciples and their Master passing quietly from one miracle to another, through a green, well-watered country such as lies around the Main, among sober Jews for the most part habited in blue, with hoods and capes like those worn by the fifteenth century inhabitants of Franconia.

The 'spirit of barter' may have been an influence which prevented the early formation of a town library, but it also taught the citizens a thoughtful care for books when a modest collection had passed into their hands.

'Lady Holichurche,' of course, was the first collector. Charlemagne's grandson, Louis the Teuton, when founding the 'Church of the Saviour' (now the cathedral) made several

presents of valuable books to the infant chapter; two, or possibly three, of these MSS. are still to be seen in the town library's admirable collection of parchments, and on the back of one, a Litany, is a list of fourteen books, written down in the twelfth century—the earliest catalogue of the chapter's possessions. One of these is a copy of the Psalter, made by Irish monks, and ornamented in the well-known Celtic style of elaborate crossings and interlaced twists. The capital letters are enormously large and long, painted quite flat in firm and brilliant colours, chiefly vermilion with primrose-tinted scrolls, and entirely without gold. A most noticeable feature in this psalter are the interlinings—glosses in *Anglo-Saxon*, written in a smaller hand below the Latin, like those of the great 'Lindisfarne Gospels' in the British Museum. The book must have been, one would fancy, a present sent to the successor of St. Boniface at Mayence by the survivors of those English friends who gladdened him in exile with their faithful gifts.

A MS. of at least equal antiquity belonged to the library of St. Saviour's, though not mentioned in the brief catalogue. It contains a paraphrase or translation into old German of a work famous and much valued throughout the Middle Age—the commentary on Job of Pope Gregory I., 'the leading spirit of Christianity for thirteen centuries,' as he is called by a recent exponent of that unfathomable book. A copy of the 'Apostolic Canons,' too, dates from the tenth century, three generations before St. Bernard came to Frankfort, flinging the whole force of his wonderful personality into the effort to wake enthusiasm for the Second Crusade.

In 1349 St. Saviour's Church was nearly destroyed by fire, and the library greatly injured. This was a few years before the Great Pestilence visited Germany; and just as that terrible scourge caused an ultimate revival of religious life, so the effect of this calamity seems to have been favourable to learning, for pious gifts made good the ravages of fire, and several MSS. of exceptional value and beauty were devoted to the restored church. Students of the art of illumination might pore for days over the ornaments, the 'flower-pattern,' and the splendid capitals in mass books and 'books of hours' which date from this period; and the illustrations to a 'Decretum of Gratian'—the great law-book of the Church—have a yet wider interest, giving as they do lively pictures of

conventual life in the thirteenth century. Some Lombard monastery furnished this splendid volume, which is filled from end to end with miniatures descriptive of the text ; each little picture gives proof of the clear and minute observation, the faithfulness to nature and delight in common things characteristic of Italian art ; while the wild poetic fancy of the northern races—the whimsical and yet intimate treatment of animal and flower life which distinguishes the illuminators of England, France, and Burgundy, is altogether absent. Turn to a section which deals with Baptism—you will see the priest and sponsors gathered round a tazza-shaped font of yellow marble, into which the infant is being dipped ; it is held face downwards, so that only its little round limbs are immersed, and you see them plainly through the daintily transparent water.

Another chapter discusses the question of monastic vocation ; whether children placed for safety in a monastery must remain there, or be free at a riper age to choose for themselves ; and at the head of this portion stand two thoughtful parents—the father clean-shaven, and clad in a scarlet robe such as Dante's townsmen might have worn, the mother in trailing pink—leading by the hand their two boys, whom they desire to leave beneath the Church's shield. One little lad runs eagerly forward, apparently begging for the sombre frock, which two monks hold ready to slip over his head ; the other hangs back, and his face plainly says, ' Don't put that horrid thing on me ! ' Accordingly, the book goes on, one, when he came to man's estate, embraced the religious life ; the other was allowed to depart, and ' joined the civil army.'

Or again, the problem arises, how far ought cloistered monks to go, in using force to defend their lives and homes against the heathen ? for the theory that all ' religious ' must be men of peace was carried so far in practice as to prevent bishops from sitting in judgment by the sheriff's side whenever a case involving bloodshed came on for trial ! A delicate little miniature represents the monastery attacked—say, by heathen Huns—who have driven the farm-servants inside its walls for shelter. The churls let out vigorously with thong and switch and such poor arms as are at their command ; and mitred clerics stand by in passive horror, their faces showing some alarm at the fiery horses of three mailed knights, who charge the enemy at

close quarters. The vigour and 'push' in the attitude of a red knight in the foreground suggest that the artist himself had known rough action and eager tussles—if indeed the horny fingers of a soldier could learn to handle a brush so finely as these paintings require. The trees in this little picture are remarkable, as a hint of the way in which the difficulties of landscape-painting began to be solved. The aquarellist—a contemporary of Giotto—felt that a distinguishing feature of his country's trees was their shady darkness—a bit of cool shelter against the hot, bright sky. He therefore painted *darkness*—a rough lozenge of blade raised on a slender stem against the blue—and then on this quaint black ground put in a number of neat little conventional green leaves and red berries.

Far older and more valuable than these exquisite paintings are three book-covers of carved ivory, two of which in their original form dated from the days of Charlemagne and his first descendants. Just at that period the traditions of classical art were still remembered, and it would seem that a school of ivory-sculptors had arisen in Lorraine, round the episcopal city of Metz, while other artists of still higher skill worked in the bordering districts of the Rhineland and Franconia. An ivory casket for liturgical use may possibly have been among the gifts presented to his new foundation by Louis the Teuton; its sides were carved with scenes from the Saviour's childhood—the crib, the oxen, the wise men's visit and warning as to their return—all rendered in a lively, intelligent style, though without any high artistic finish; the attitudes are vigorous, but the figures squat and big-headed, the drapery stiff, and its folds not deeply cut. Either by accident, or in obedience to fashion, this casket was at last broken up; five of the reliefs from it were (probably in the fifteenth century) used to form a book-cover, and arranged round another carving of much the same date as themselves, but of far higher merit. This central relief represents the baptism of the Lord, or rather that moment before the baptism when His forerunner seemed to remonstrate; the two figures, grouped beneath a tree, are most admirably rendered—full of life and yet not exaggerated in action—the hands and turn of each head used to emphasise, not pantomime, the words; the drapery rich and flowing, but not impeding movement.

But this is only one among the treasures of the cathedral, and

the cathedral only furnished one of several streams flowing from the various religious houses, which at the beginning of this century united in the town library. Two principal sources contributed to its actual formation—the monastic library of the Barefoot Carmelites, and the private collection of a benefactor, Ludwig of Marburg, surnamed ‘of the Paradise.’

That old blind King of Bohemia, whose crest and motto passed over to our Prince of Wales on Cressy field, left behind him a son, so far his opposite in fate and disposition that he climbed to the imperial throne. Karl IV. was elected as being a poor and weak prince, the result of a compromise between the factions of the day; but he showed himself a match for his electors, ranged the great moneyed cities on his side, and worked his way on to a position of considerable power. In 1349, the year of his accession, a stranger came to Frankfort, destined to be in many ways the double or counterpart of the emperor, by whose favour he contrived to rise. It seems to be a commonplace that the men of greatest eminence in a corporation come from outside; this new-comer, however, was not a penniless Dick Whittington, but a certain Sigfrid from the little town of Marburg, whose father was nick-named ‘the Rich.’ Admitted to the freedom of the Free City, he swung himself up to eminence among the burghers; he did not cringe or wriggle, but somehow elbowed his burly way to greatness, married the daughter of the foremost city-elder, and fenced himself round with valuable houses and estates. One of these, just opposite the beautiful sculptured portal of ‘Our Dear Lady’s’ church, had the quaint name which stuck to Sigfrid and his family—‘the Paradise’; he bought its next-door neighbour too, the ‘Vulture’ house, rebuilt both, and had the honour of using them as hostelry, when in 1374 Karl IV., and in later years the mad King Wenceslas, deigned to be his guests.

Those who have read Professor Riehl’s charming little pin-hole pictures of city-life in the Middle Ages, will easily imagine the fiery conflicts which raged in Frankfort at that time between the liberalising ‘Guilds’ and the conservative Court party. Sigfrid’s position depended on the help of the latter; he was rich enough to buy the support of the Emperor, who ordered the town to give him the next place vacant on the bench of aldermen, and a little later promoted him, in spite of general opposition, to be mayor. Successful in these civic

struggles, Sigfrid, like the typical rich man of the Psalms, had also 'children at his desire, and left the rest of his substance to'—two disobedient sons.

At least, if history has nothing to say of Peter the junior's unworthiness—the fact that he attained no eminence, while his descendants received the cognomen of 'Lump' or Scamp, would seem to point in that direction. The elder son spent his time in violent feuds with his father, step-mother, and her children, and in bitter contests with the Council of the town. Neither his son nor grandson lived as citizens of Frankfort; it was not till the next generation that one of the 'Paradise' family returned to the famous house.

The talent of the great-great-grandfather Sigfrid reappears in Ludwig 'of the Paradise,' but joined with happier elements. His life seems to have been one long sequence of successes, without the hot feuds and bitter enmities which filled his ancestor's days. His remarkable gifts were devoted to the study of law, and were early recognised by the Frankfort burghers, who elected him, at the age of twenty-five, to that office of alderman which it had cost Sigfrid such struggles to win. A skilled lawyer was needed among the 'Schöffen' or aldermen who formed the 'front bench' of the City Council; the 'second bench' did not exercise judicial functions, so that it would have offered no field for Ludwig's attainments in written and traditionary law.

But if man's nature is, as Karshish said, 'Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,' there was more of the airy bubble than the earthly paste in Ludwig's constitution. He was full of aspirations—restless, striving after some ideal—he could not tie himself to the soil; even his marriage with the daughter of a much-respected citizen could not keep him at Frankfort. In the seven years onwards from 1466 he changed his residence and his field of labour no less than four times, earning as high a reputation in diplomacy as he had won in law. At thirty-three he settled down again finally in the service of Frankfort, which owed many easements and privileges to his influence with the Emperor (Frederick III.) and the Pope; he went often on missions to the imperial court, and twice to Rome, and found the sphere of activity he had so restlessly sought, in the great currents of international policy.

Ludwig had climbed, by his own unaided powers, to a high position in the political world, and an equally high place in

the esteem of his fellow-burghers. But—'what next?' that provoking questioner, St. Philip Neri, might have asked, if he had been in Rome to meet him. The ethereal, spiritual element was still strong within him, and perhaps, too, the longing for a new sensation; like Rudyard Kipling's *Purun Dagh*, he would lay down his high offices, and go out into the world with a pilgrim's staff; in 1484 (his 44th year), he designed 'by the help of God to undertake a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre of our dear Master,' and in preparation for so serious a move, he made the testament by which he bequeathed his books 'to his dear lords the Council of Frankfort' to form a '*Liberie* according to their good pleasure.'

Here we are driven up, as it were, against a blank wall; the records tell nothing. What became of that journey to Jerusalem? Did he 'rush' it with a speed as astonishing as that of Wolsey's first diplomatic mission—when he was back from Flanders before the king believed him started? or did his enthusiasm cool—or other duties intervene? Most probably the last; for Ludwig remained in Europe, rose to the highest dignities his townsmen could bestow on him, and died quietly at home at the age of sixty-two.

The testament remained: his excellent wife modified it thus far, that she put off the time when 'her dear goodman's' books were to pass into the town's possession from her own death till that of a nephew, who was dean of the cathedral. This occurred in 1527, and in that year the city inherited its first important collection of books, to be followed within two years by the library of the Barefoot Carmelites, which with the monastic buildings was freely made over by the brethren to the town.

It was but a small library—300 volumes at most, of which about half came from Dr. Ludwig. Yet his gift had this special importance, that it tended in the direction of the 'New Learning.' Thirty out of the 157 books enumerated in his will are editions of Greek and Latin classics; the '*Famous Women*,' of Boccaccio, too, is among them; and one, the '*Elegancia*,' of Laurentino Valla, represented the literature of the Humanists—the advance-guard in that day of progress and research. Ludwig in his youth had seen the Tuscan poet, Æneas Silvius Piccolomini, crowned with laurel at Frankfort by the Emperor's hands; in his visits to Rome he renewed a



friendship with that celebrated man, who as Cardinal and Pope favoured the early growth of the Renaissance; and like Sir Thomas Shore, whom in many ways he resembled, he combined singular attainments in law with a quiet ardour in the cause of classical study.

The New Learning, which had begun its life—a veritable ‘siege baby’—in the storm of Constantinople, was tenderly cherished at first in Western Europe, only to be roughly hustled a little later by its robuster twin, the Reformation. But though Luther’s work violently disturbed the peace needed for the growth of literature, yet he was an enthusiast for education; and Frankfort responded to his appeal that the great cities should ‘spare neither labour nor cost to procure good libraries or book-houses,’ in throwing open to public use that of the ‘Barefoots,’ which by gifts and legacies quickly increased. Through the seventeenth century it grew in importance, receiving the right to demand a copy of each new work published in the city, and in 1668 was united to the ‘Paradise’ library, which had hitherto been limited to the exclusive use of town officials, in a room built for its reception behind the ‘Roman Hall.’ In 1690 the patriotism of the Council went so far as to make it expend a large sum (3,300 florins) on buying the books of a deceased citizen—outbidding the famous collector, Cardinal Mazarin. This step, however, proved the high-water mark in literature for more than a hundred years; from 1711 onwards, Frankfort was busy with imperial coronations, wars and alarms, leagues and combinations for or against the House of Austria, until in 1759 it was occupied by French troops, and in 1806 became an appanage of the duchy of Hesse. Little time was left for the business of the learned, and very little money; the sum of 30 florins, paid not yearly but *messentlich*—at the great half-yearly fairs—had long to suffice for income; and the complaints of one official after another, that ‘no one takes the affairs of the library in hand,’ awoke little attention.

In 1756 a choleric librarian wailed that ‘valuable books and MS. treatises are lent out all over the town, even to artizans, and have not been returned for ten or twenty years,’ proposing as a remedy for this inconvenience a reading room, ‘where students might sit warm in winter;’ but 140 years passed before this project was carried out!

The lowest pitch was reached towards the end of the

eighteenth century, when that part of the old 'Barefoot' convent in which the books were housed was pulled down, and the poor inmates stowed away very much like lumber. In the dark days which followed the fall of the Holy Roman Empire, from 1806 to 1813, when Frankfort had lost her ancient freedom, no effective steps were taken to improve the position of her hoarded treasures; but on the restoration of independence after the battle of Leipsig, the town resolved to commemorate this great event by a building worthy of the library it was to house. The matter had already been debated for almost eleven years; seven more passed before the foundations were laid, and after another twelve the new home was ready; in August, 1825, it was opened to the public, who have ever since had free access to all that it contains.

Few matters call forth warmer passions, differences, and discussions than building-plans. Even an individual has many heart-searchings before he lays one stone upon another, and in a corporation the tension is more acute. Of course there was the party who wished to do what was ideally best for literature, and the one which aimed at doing what was practically best with the public money. The liberal legacies made by two important citizens spurred the senate on to action; plans were prepared, and as many as eleven different sites suggested. The two collections had hitherto been kept in a very central place—close to the Römer, the heart and soul of the municipality, and bitter complaints were made against the site eventually chosen—a somewhat remote spot by the river, south-east of the town, well adapted for the quiet labours of students, but not then, as it is now, accessible to the reading public.

Another discussion raged round the manner in which the books were to be arranged. One man of learning—the keeper of the town archives—suggested the plan of 'magazines'—rooms, that is, filled with book-cases of moderate height, easily reached by a couple of steps—a plan which has quite lately been adopted here, as in most of the great modern library buildings; but this novel design was rejected in favour of the old-fashioned arrangement—large, lofty halls surrounded by shelves running up to the ceiling, where the luckless student, only able to reach the top by a mason's ladder, was thankful if he could carry his huge volumes to the ground without injury to life and limb!

Just at this time, when the library was moving into a dignified and independent dwelling, it obtained the services of a man of real genius, one of those born devotees of learning who are able to transform a monotonous and humdrum office into one of value and esteem. The seven libraries of the eighteenth century, sparingly paid, and placed under the authority, first of a body of school inspectors and then of a 'consistory,' had been men of some culture but little initiative. They wrote in that curious jargon of Latin and French which passed for German in the days of Frederick the Great; one of them resigned and took to the Bar, another held office as a stepping-stone to the benches of the City Council; and a third carried on a trade in coins which brought him strongly, though unjustly, under suspicion of turning the public collection to his own profit. But in 1822 a young student, who had for some time been working as assistant to the keeper of the town archives, was appointed sub-librarian in a kind of provisional capacity, in spite of the curious objection raised by a member of the Council, that he was 'young, rich, and already famous on his own account,' besides being 'addicted to *belles-lettres* and the sort of poetising carried on by Goethe's followers.'

John Friedrich Böhmer was one of those pioneers of the science of history who made an epoch of 'the Thirties'; his special subject was the rise and growth of the Italian republics, or city states, and he contributed a most valuable group of books dealing with this period to his pet child, the library. Other child he had none, and the muse of history was his only bride; he was for a time engaged to a certain charming Amelia, step-daughter of the Swiss historian Constant, but the only memorial of their betrothal is a portrait of him by her hand—and this too the library has inherited. Every detail connected with its administration was studied by him with zealous care; while in a subordinate position he negotiated the transfer of the secularised Church libraries without a hitch of any kind—those which remained, that is, for a great many books belonging to the Dominicans and Capuchins had been destroyed without examination, as being probably worthless!

His enthusiasm called forth a like feeling in his fellow-townsmen; gifts flowed in during the time he presided over the library, and in especial one open-handed patron and friend, a Herr von Mylius, residing in Milan, made a present to his birthplace of a most beautiful copy of Dante, written and

illuminated in the fifteenth century by hands almost as skilful as those which painted the miniatures in the Duke of Urbino's books, now the glory of the Vatican.

From 1830 to 1863 Böhmer was nominal as well as actual head of the great institution, regulating its business, adding munificently to its possessions, and keeping on good terms (not always an easy matter) with the other great lights in literature and research who shared his interest. One of these in particular, a famous African traveller, Eduard Rüppell, was a most patriotic supporter of the library—a valuable benefactor and a touchy, sensitive patron. He it was who rescued the really excellent cabinet of coins—the result of several legacies—from its inglorious hiding-place in the Römer—the coins had all been packed up in 1806, ready for flight across the border in the event of invasion—sorted them, convinced the town of their high value, and added to them freely during many years, both from the yields of his journeys in Cordofan and Abyssinia, and the gains from skilful purchase and exchange. Rüppell was not a very easy friend to keep; on the appointment of a sub-librarian—who, he complained, would occupy one of the available seats for working in the little room where he carried on his numismatic studies—he threatened to resign, and when in 1866 the town finally lost its historic freedom, he left his fatherland in disgust and became a burgher of Zurich—only to quit Switzerland on an outbreak of cholera and return to end his days in his native town. He outlived Böhmer by nearly twenty years—lived, that is to say, through a period of respectable inaction at the library—and died in the year when a vigorous upward movement began, under the guidance of the present genial and energetic head.

The records of this movement are somewhat prosaic, as so much of nineteenth century history is bound to be: the artist has yet to arise who shall give to electric lighting and hot-air apparatus the grandeur of a fireplace by Sansovini or the romance of Marmion's 'dim cresset'; the regular, methodical acquisition of new books and intercourse with learned foundations does not often produce thrilling incidents, such as the discovery of an original 'Guttenberg Bible' in the convent library of St. Leonard's Church; nor is it easy to endue the neat stands and mechanical arrangements of a 'magazine' with a dignity equal to that of the old country-house libraries which so often fall a prey to fire. Up till 1870 the book-

treasures of Frankfort still suffered from that overcrowding which had been lamented as long ago as 1749, when they were 'lying four deep on the shelves'; no warmth whatever was introduced into the building, so that in a severe winter the cold of the book-covers actually scorched the fingers of courageous readers!

Whatever romance of martyrdom attached to study in those days has now been done away; a perpetual summer climate reigns in the great hall where forty places for working are arranged at the desks and tables, lighted by little electric reading-lamps; and a perpetual activity rules there and in the circulating department, by means of which all citizens and persons recommended by them may obtain books. In 1894 as many as 9,000 works were thus exchanged; while the 33,000 taken out by students using the reading-room show that there are many who would echo old Fletcher's words—

'Give me  
Leave to enjoy myself. That place that does  
Contain my books, the best companions, is  
To me a glorious court, where hourly I  
Converse with the old sages and philosophers;  
And sometimes, for variety, I confer  
With kings and emperors, and weigh their counsels;  
Calling their victories, if unjustly got,  
Unto a strict account; and in my fancy  
Deface their ill-placed statues. Can I then  
Part with such constant pleasure, to embrace  
Uncertain vanities? No; be it your care  
To augment a heap of wealth: it shall be mine  
To increase in knowledge.'

THEODORA NOWNS.

*A MOUNTAIN SKETCH IN WALES.*

---

MOUNTAIN summits sere, sun-smitten,  
Overlook a pass unknown,  
Trode by bleating sheep alone  
Deep in bracken, crimson-litten  
By the foxglove, freshly blown.

By the brook a yellowhammer,  
Flitting 'mid the boulders gray,  
Trills his minor note alway,  
Adding only to the glamour  
And the stillness of the day.

Day—and yet arisen newly  
From the west the moon is seen  
Moving, like some ghost serene,  
Through the unclouded sky, that blue  
Arches in that lone ravine.

MAIDIE DICKSON.

*THE MAIN CHANCE.*

BY CHRISTABEL R. COLERIDGE, AUTHOR OF 'WAYNFLETE,' 'THE TENDER  
MERCIES OF THE GOOD,' 'THE PROPHET'S MANTLE,' ETC.

---

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## JIM.

THERE was another complication in Jasper Wickham's affairs in which he felt it necessary to take the initiative. He would not be publicly called to account by Max Mervyn for his behaviour to Katie Fielding. That advantage he would not allow to that justice-loving youth.

Florella was going on well, the strain of anxiety on her account was a little lessened; she had looked and spoken. Guy, though still banished, was bidden to hope. Mrs. Lennox's mind was therefore a little more free to wonder how much folly Katie might have allowed her little girls to participate in, a point of view even now hardly crowded out of the mother's mind.

Katie, when called to an interview, could not be considered satisfactory. She had, indeed, confessed everything. Her horror at what she had brought upon Florella had scared her into doing so, but she justified her feelings and her confidence in her lover. She had been wrong, no doubt, but she would never give him up; if she was never allowed to see him again, she would wait till he made a way through the darkness; she knew that *he* would!

'Mr. Wickham.'

A new and stupid parlourmaid, herself one of Mrs. Lennox's trials in all the bustle of approaching Christmas, opened the drawing-room door and ushered in the visitor at this juncture.

Katie, between anger with her lover and the determination to stand to her colours, did not know how to look. Mrs.

Lennox gave one gasp and valiantly stepped into the breach. Why should the Vicar have to make a quarrel with a useful parishioner? *She* was the person to protect Katie.

'Mr. Wickham,' she said with courage, 'your name was on our lips. You will not be surprised that I have to ask you for explanations.'

'I have come to give them,' said Wickham.

He could not look at Katie. For the moment he felt that the whole indignant Committee of the Kirkover, Flete Dale and Ousely Coal Company would be easier to face than those wide blue eyes, tear-swollen but confiding.

He did the odious thing well. He blamed himself for having allowed himself to be carried away into attentions to Miss Fielding, which his unfortunate circumstances made it impossible for him to carry out. He was not able to marry. He knew that the facts had come to Mrs. Lennox's knowledge, and he had come to express his regret for having allowed a little amusement to assume a serious appearance; Miss Fielding herself, he knew, had never mistaken him. He only was to be blamed.

This he said both to give Katie a cue and partly to keep a ray of self-respect. The truth, of course, he considered of no importance.

Mrs. Lennox would have liked him better if he had thrown himself at Katie's feet, but he was certainly helping her to get rid of him, and Katie had given her abundant proof that he was *not* alone to be blamed.

'I take it for granted, then,' she said icily, 'that a very foolish matter is now ended. If so, there is nothing further to say.'

Wickham murmured an assent. How could he get himself out of the room? Katie sat all in a little heap on the sofa. Her pretty hair had fallen loosely over her shoulder, her small hands were squeezed together. She looked eminently desirable and sweet in his eyes. If he had only been an honest and penniless struggler for a living—if he had only been himself six months before!

'I—I don't mind about being engaged, I've done too wrong to deserve it,' said Katie suddenly. 'When perhaps I've killed Florella, I ought not to be happy. But it wasn't all your doing, and I'm glad I've got it to remember. It will be—a memory. I shall never have what's real!'



'We will close the subject,' said Mrs. Lennox with decision, and a sudden resolve that this wrong-headed yet pitiable maiden should not guide her daughters any more. She hated sentiment, and what she perhaps harshly called posing. 'There is no more to be said, Mr. Wickham's sentiments are at length clear.'

Another entrance, and the Vicar's voice, benevolent but perturbed—

'My dear, I have just met this young lady, a friend of Miss Vyner's. She has come kindly to offer to help us—Miss Edgell.'

Molly Edgell, in her shabby travelling coat and hat, pale-faced and agitated, came forward, making hurried excuses in her sharp, clear voice.

'Miss Staunton told me—I've put up at the Railway Inn. I'm—but Florella—Jim! Jim *Randall!*'

He had been standing right opposite her in the light of the window; now she screamed and recoiled, sinking down on the nearest seat.

That the newcomer was crazy—that she had mistaken the person, flashed across Mrs. Lennox's mind; but Wickham's face showed too plainly that he had answered to this new name.

Molly, colourless, but struggling for composure, rose in a second to her feet.

'I—I have made a mistake,' she faltered.

'No, Molly,' said Wickham, with a desperate laugh, 'you have only fired the match. Our family history will soon, no doubt, be public property. My cousin and I,' he added, turning to the Lennoxes, 'have not met for many years.'

'I perceive,' said Mr. Lennox gravely, 'that there is probably much to explain. But as this young lady is alone and appears to be in trouble, it is, of course, our business in this house to offer her what assistance we can, especially as Miss Vyner has already made her name known to us. What has passed is no concern of ours.'

Wickham laughed again. 'The game's up, Molly,' he said recklessly, 'and the revelations may as well come from you as from me. I'll leave you to make them. It's only a question of time. Good morning!'

He went. Molly sat still, fighting hard for self-control, smothering a tempest of emotion. Katie stood staring at her,

feeling all her sustaining convictions ooze away from her. Before Wickham's look and tone now all his looks and tones for *her* were put out of court and seemed as nothing.

The Vicar looked at his wife, who spoke with careful matter-of-factness.

'It is impossible,' she said, addressing Molly, 'for you to see Florella. We hope all is going on well, but she is not allowed even to see Mr. Waynflete—indeed it is only to-day that she has at all come to herself. Still, we are very hopeful this morning. Everything must give way to keeping her quiet. Katie, go and ask for some wine and biscuits for Miss Edgell, and be sure the girls do not talk on the staircase.'

'I to fetch wine for *her*!' muttered Katie under her breath as she walked out of the room; but by that time Molly had regained her self-command.

'You are extremely kind,' she said; 'I need trouble no one. Florella Vyner is my friend. Miss Staunton told me of her danger, and as my holidays began this morning, it was less terrible to spend the time of suspense within reach of her. Perhaps I might do some letter-writing, if needful. At least I shall know exactly how she is. As for my cousin, we parted many years ago under painful circumstances. He is not on terms with all his family, and I did not know that he was here.'

'Mr. Wickham,' said Mrs. Lennox, 'is the certificated manager of the Ingleby coal-pits.'

'Ah, yes! Wickham?' said Molly, after an instant's pause. 'I did not know that he had taken that name. The family had not begun to use it when we parted. Pray don't trouble about me, I'm quite independent; I am a newspaper reporter and used to going about. I've engaged my room at the inn; don't think any more of me.'

Mrs. Lennox, however, perceived the tension of the girl's whole figure and the trembling of her hands though she kept her voice steady. She had evidently had a tremendous shock, and though she listened eagerly to the details which Mrs. Lennox now gave her about Florella, it was evident that an interest transcending even this one had suddenly come upon her. She accepted a glass of wine and a biscuit when they appeared, and then insisted on taking leave, conducting herself with a degree of self-command and *savoir faire* which brought the difficult interview well to an end.

'I will come again and ask for a later report by and by,' she said, as she departed.

'It seems to me,' said Mrs. Lennox, 'that Mr. Wickham is extremely like a villain in a play; something is going to come out about him. I hope he isn't going to ruin the neighbourhood. There are ever so many people wanting me about the church decorations and Katie will be worse than no good. I wish the world would stop when things become quite unmanageable, but it doesn't—at least at Christmas-time.'

It certainly did not at Ingleby Mills; Guy did not try to escape the pressure. The one thing which he could not bear was to sit still, wait for news, or give himself rest, as Cuthbert would have had him do. There was a bad time coming at the beginning of the year for his business, and he faced out all the details of it, made plans for raising money, taking the sacrifice of Waynflete for granted without, for the time, one pang. He felt as if he was acting for some one else.

He was called upon to act, or at least to announce his intention of acting sooner than he expected. Early in the afternoon Mr. Raby came to him, as he had thought likely, to discuss the old report and Mr. Wickham's action in the matter. They had hardly begun to discuss the question of a new investigation by a new authority, and Guy had confined himself to saying that he felt it impossible to ignore the old opinion, when Mr. Greenaway was announced.

Young Mervyn, he said, who was taking his Christmas dinner with them at Elton Hall, had come over early to join in some bicycle expedition which his young people had organised, and had, very properly, asked to speak to him about the discovery made at Waynflete. One in a thousand, he was, that lad, stuck to business matters when other young fellows would have thought of nothing but spinning after the young ladies. Now what was to be done? He'd always thought Wickham too clever by half and too fine for his place. Seemed as if he was a bit of a charlatan. Hoped he hadn't led Mr. Raby into any trouble.

It was, perhaps, more natural than justifiable that a violent sense of partisanship for Wickham seized upon both the gentlemen whom he was addressing. Guy, who knew too well that Mr. Greenway's estimate approached the truth, was determined not to say so, and Mr. Raby remarked stiffly that he had ample proof of Mr. Wickham's skill in engineering.

matters, but that Mr. Wickham himself had been to him last night and requested that another authority might be consulted.

'That,' said Guy, 'is quite essential. I regard the offer of shares made to myself, and also for the purchase of Fletehead, as cancelled. I can no longer regard myself as having any rightful concern in the matter.'

'Well, well, Mr. Guy,' said Mr. Raby, 'we shall see—we shall see. If all turns out as we hope—we can't do without Flete Dale and Fletehead. You must let it stand over. You mustn't give your mining rights away in any sense, my lad, in any sense.'

Mr. Greenaway looked at Guy with a meaning look.

'Nay,' he said, 'Flete Dale's not a property to be despised, not at all—poor land, I suppose, but a fine place in its way. Only wants a few thousands laid out on it. Just the sort of old place I should like to put in order. I'm on the look-out for a place of my own in this part of the country, got my eye on one or two—if I should hear they were in the market. That's neither here nor there, though. The question is who is to be our new specialist. Directly after Christmas we'll have to see about it.'

Guy sat quite still, looking at the old document in his hand. So this was the fate for which Waynflete was reserved. Here was the fire for the burnt-offering and the wood for the sacrifice!

Mr. Raby, who thought his silence quite accounted for by the bad taste of the previous remarks, resumed the discussion about the new expert; undertook to inquire from the proper authorities, and then brought the interview to a close, remarking that the business might now stand over till after Christmas.

Guy showed Mr. Greenaway out, but detained Mr. Raby for a moment. He came back, shut the door, and looked him in the face.

'I shall have to sell Waynflete,' he said. 'I thought the coal shares might have set matters straight.'

'God bless my soul, my dear boy, you don't say so!' cried Mr. Raby, much shocked.

'Yes,' said Guy, 'it has to be done. The truth is, Aunt Margaret never really had capital enough to do it justice after she bought it back. I couldn't live on it if I dropped the

business, even if that was justifiable. Times, you know, are not easy. It's taken a good deal to bring me to it. But I'd nearly as soon sell myself !'

He covered his face with his hands. Before the kind old friend and neighbour his self-control gave way. Too much strain had been put on it.

'Come, come, come !' said the old gentleman, putting his hand on Guy's shoulder. 'You have had a great deal too much anxiety. Wait a bit, wait a bit, till you can talk it over with Florella. Bless you ! She'll do well enough, and she's one in a thousand for good sense. When you talk to her, she'll find a way !'

'No !' said Guy with passion. '*This* is the way ! Nothing less will win the battle. I *can* cut off my right hand, but I'm not made so as to feel the Kingdom an equivalent !'

'Look here, my lad,' said Mr. Raby ; 'I haven't lived alongside of Waynflete and your old aunt and you for seventy-five years seeing and hearing nothing. I'm a plain man and I leave mysteries to the Almighty, but don't you be driven out, Guy, not by man nor devil ! Don't leave the old place to its fate—its fate, my lad. We don't speak of these things, but we know—we know !'

Guy left his hand in his kind old neighbour's clasp, and looked up with eyes still moist. 'No,' he said, in a gentle, matter-of-fact tone. 'The Fate doesn't belong to the valley, it belongs to ourselves—to me. I shouldn't leave it behind me in possession. I should—I *have* destroyed it. It wasn't the land that was cursed, it was ourselves. There are a great many ways of explaining it, but we who have always known it, as you say, we know. After all, my duty is just the same as other people's, to pay my way and defraud nobody. An angel from heaven, you know, cannot tell us any more than that, nor any poor, restless spirit from elsewhere. But when the full price is paid comes rest !'

Perhaps Guy had never spoken to friend or lover or fellow inquirer the whole truth as he felt it so simply as he spoke it now to the old neighbour who had lived alongside and imbibed the influences, the thoughts, of hill and valley, unconsciously and without recognition.

'I'll stand by you, I'll stand by you ! I'll see you through,' said Mr. Raby, gripping his hand. 'I'll see you through it. God bless you !'

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## THE LAST OF WAYNFLETE.

IT was Boxing Day, dry and sunny winter weather, with a clear sky and a light breeze, not too sharp to be pleasant. Eleven bicycles, ridden by eleven merry and hearty young people, were spinning over the moorland roads between Elton Hall and Flete Dale. They were going to visit the old church and perhaps the Hall, and, spite of hills and dales, were going by Ousely Edge back to Rilston, where refreshments on a sumptuous scale awaited them at the 'George.' Max Mervyn and Sybil Greenaway led the party and chattered gaily as they went.

Max's opinion of himself, never morbidly humble, had risen several inches since he came to Elton Hall. Hadn't his host shown him marked confidence, and made him the recipient of all the good-humoured, genial, justifiable boasting, which seemed to Max such a natural and agreeable style of conversation? Together they had torn Wickham's character and 'Palmer Brothers' future into shreds. Mr. Greenaway had a fine contempt for diminishing capital and business conducted on a small scale. Max had shrewdly and loyally said that they were no fools at Palmer's, but he was pleased and flattered at being told that it was a poor concern for a rising young man like himself to be connected with.

Then he heard how Elton Hall would probably be in the market before the lease was out, and how Mr. Greenaway would like to put a ring-fence round that and Flete Dale. 'Not that he and Mrs. Greenaway would wish to set up house-keeping in an old tumble-down place like that, but the young folks might fancy it, and a few thousands might make it tolerable. He understood the Maxwells had had it for a time, but they seemed to have let it slip, and as for the Waynfletes, buying the place back had been the old lady's fancy; it brought in nothing and was a mere burden on young Waynflete, who couldn't even put a load of manure on his land, when it was as hungry as it could be. There was but one end to it for him, if the coal seams turned out to be worthless, and Mr. Greenaway believed that Wickham had nearly done them all. Poor old Raby would pay for it!'

This was the sort of thing to make a young man feel his own importance, especially as it was all true.

Then everybody at Elton Hall was friendly and jolly and hearty, and the sumptuous comfort of all the arrangements was just what Max admired and thought good.

Surely Sybil Greenaway was exactly the sort of girl that he liked, up to everything, jolly and kind, quite as stylish as Violet Staunton and nothing like so satirical and scornful. So good-tempered, so ready to enjoy herself, so smartly turned out! And the pockets of that pretty coat had such ample golden linings!

If a fellow got *her*, his fortune would be made and it was obvious that her choice might get what old Attorney Maxwell had let slip through his fingers. And Max was the right sort, and though not a millionaire, certainly not a pauper, with brains for business too, a head on his shoulders, and a connection with the place—a kind of pedigree so to speak. If ever he could buy—or marry—a place, there was nothing he should like so well as Waynflete. There was something rather queer and exciting in coming to look at it with Miss Greenaway.

She was not as pretty as Kits. Max felt quite certain of this as they rode over the edge above Flete Dale, and began to catch glimpses of the rough roads and thick woods below them. Through all the chatter of 'tyres' and 'pace' and recent runs and through all his thoughts of Attorney Maxwell and Waynflete Hall, Max had been carrying on a comparison.

The smarter and completer Miss Sybil looked, the better she rode and the kinder she was, the more Max was haunted by visions of Katie, in the shabbiest of frocks, clinging on in a fright to Laura's bicycle and wishing it was not the correct thing to ride it, her fair hair tumbling down and her blue eyes too often absent and wistful.

Yes, and now she had snubbed him and quarrelled with him! Was he the sort to hang about a girl who preferred another fellow? Certainly not.

Nevertheless, he knew that Cuthbert Staunton, who admired queer old engravings, said that Miss Fielding was like a Bartolozzi or a Botticelli, Max wasn't sure which. Wickham had gone quite off his head about her, and Miss Vyner, a real artist, had made a study of her with all that absurd hair fluffed out in a cloud, and a pair of white butterfly wings indicated behind her. Miss Greenaway looked like an illustration to a

short story in a fashionable paper, very well drawn and up-to-date, a style of art which Max much preferred to Bartolozzi or Botticelli. It was more the sort of thing a man understood.

Still——. He did hope Katie wasn't crying in the school-room at Ingleby Vicarage because that infernal scoundrel Wickham had played fast and loose with her, or because Mrs. Lennox had scolded her. The scene shifted, and the image of Katie, crying in a sunbonnet and a pinafore in Love Lane at Maywood, because she had left the gate open and all Farmer Gay's little pigs had run away, came before him.

Max recalled the joy of hunting those little black pigs back to their quarters ; Katie had kissed him when the last one was safe in. He would make it hot for Wickham if the new specialist found out that the coal was a fraud.

No cyclist with any regard for his machine, however willing he might be to risk his neck, could dream of riding down the stony track into Flete Dale. The young people, therefore, left their bicycles at a farm at the top of the hill, and chatting and laughing, prepared to cross the valley on their own feet. Max and Sybil, were still a little ahead of the rest of the party, Max's momentary visions dispersed again by the pleasant and substantial present.

The Waynflete legends and the Waynflete ghost ! So queer, so interesting. Everybody told anecdotes, everybody asked questions. Mr. Mervyn, of course, knew all about it. So, laughing and chattering, and telling each other ghost stories, they crossed the bridge and looked down into the dark water, climbing up to the house through the wood. But the spectre, as young Greenaway said, 'refused to oblige.'

'He's gone out for the day, and left the front door open,' said Sybil, as they came through the decaying winter garden and up to the old house, which showed all its need of paint and varnish, all its overgrowth of ivy and climbing roses, as it stood out in the clear, cold sunshine.

'He's left somebody in charge, I suppose,' said Max, pulling at the bell, which, however, brought no response, and they went into the low, dark hall, and peeped about with a pleasant pretence of creepiness.

'Ghastly old shop, to be sure,' said Phil Greenaway.

'Oh no,' said his sister, 'it's quite too awfully sweet. Look here,' opening a door, 'here's the drawing-room, I believe. I



declare, Mr. Mervyn, your ancestor might have sat on these lovely old chairs—Chippendale, of course. Gone out of fashion again? Oh no, not when they're real. Mother'd give a fortune for them and have them done up. Do you dare go upstairs? Oh, I—yes. If we meet the person in charge we can give her half a crown. She oughtn't to have left the door open.'

So up the shallow oak stairs they went, Max, who had been to the house once before, leading the way, feeling important and rather more solemn than he expected, till they came to the octagon room at the end of the upstairs passage.

'Oh, I say, it would make a sweet smoking-room,' said Sybil, looking round. 'What a dear little funny place!'

'This,' said Max, 'is where the last Squire Waynflete shot himself, when he'd given up the title deeds to Attorney Maxwell. That's old Mrs. Waynflete. Handsome old lady, isn't she? And that's Guy Waynflete, who saw the ghost, and didn't come when they expected him. Looks rather sorry about it, doesn't he?'

'Oh, it's simply funny beyond anything,' said Sybil.

'Rather decent old stories, aren't they?' said her brother.

'I say, hark!'

A steady, regular footstep sounded on the bare boards of the empty house, upstairs, along the passage.

'The ghost,' cried one of the young men, striking an attitude.

'The caretaker!' ejaculated Sybil. 'Oh, where's half a crown? I'll settle her! Oh—oh—Mr. Waynflete!'

The name came out at the end of a gasp, for there, in the doorway, stood a figure, tall, pale, astonished, as unexpected as the ghost, and nearly as incongruous. Loud barks, a rapid scuttle, and in flew Rawdie, every hair on end, like a bottle brush possessed by a demon, barking, growling, swearing with fury. He set at Max, who was foremost, and so entirely took the stage that apologies were inaudible. Guy laughed out loud, and Miss Greenaway, who was fond of dogs, exclaimed—

'Oh, what a perfect little love! Come here, you darling! Mr. Waynflete! We're too ashamed. We thought your lovely house was empty. We've cycled over. You'll forgive us? Mr. Mervyn's been telling us all the sweet old stories! Oh, won't that little beauty let me kiss him?'

'I'm afraid he won't, at present,' said Guy, with rather a grim smile, as he silenced Rawdie, who lay down, looking anything but kissable. 'The house is open because I came over for an hour or two. But you are very welcome. The place is quite ready for inspection. Can I show you anything more?'

'Oh, we ought to be getting on. There's the church. Mr. Mervyn was going to take us there,' said Sybil. 'There are dear old tombs, aren't there? But it is a bad place for cycling.'

'Cycles were not contemplated when our roads were made. Mr. Mervyn's great-great-grandfather is, I believe, buried in our churchyard; I think his tombstone wants cleaning. Perhaps Mervyn would like to put up a brass to him?'

Max felt somehow that this was a 'nasty one,' even while Sybil, a little puzzled, but with appropriate solemnity, looked at him and said—

'Oh, yes, poor old gentleman, so he might.'

'Let me show you the library. The panels are curious,' said Guy, a little bit ashamed of his last speech. 'Let me do the honours of my bare boards and empty cupboards.'

He turned into a very courteous and gracious host, pointing out sundry queer old chests and odd bits of furniture, called the astonished and somewhat indignant Mrs. Fleming, and made her produce glasses of fresh milk and oat-cake for the young ladies—in fact, he made himself uncommonly agreeable, though, as Sybil said afterwards, 'he looked so pale and had such queer eyes that it was very like being entertained by the ghost.'

They sat and stood about the dark old library and talked nothings. Max was oddly subdued. It did not even occur to him to suggest that the sideboard would fetch a round sum in Wardour Street, or to laugh as the others did when the incorruptible Rawdie emerged from beneath his master's chair, slowly, and, as it were, reluctantly, then sitting up in front of Miss Greenaway, signified that he could eat a piece of oat-cake.

'Rawdie,' said Guy, when they were all gone, 'are we selling our birthright for a mess of pottage?'

Rawdie put his head on one side and looked sympathetic, but he wagged his tail cheerfully. Oat-cake was good.

Guy went up again into the octagon room, and took out of

the cupboard the box of papers which he had come to fetch. The records of the value attached to his land formerly would guide him in the price he would put upon it now. Then he shut the door and stood alone between the two pictures, looking from one to the other.

'Aunt Margaret,' he said aloud, 'if you had lived three years longer you would have sold it too, for our honest name. It would have broken your heart. But you'll give me your blessing now, for it's by your own grit I do it, and I thank God that the pang comes to me. If I had not done it, Aunt Margaret, then I should have been the coward you thought me once. Now I can stand up and face you.'

Then he turned and looked at the other picture, at the face so like his own, and yet so different.

'You lost it, I give it up,' he said, and looked with wide-open eyes all round the room.

'We give it up, and go away,' he said at last. 'I have "laid the ghost."'

\* \* \* \* \*

'Perhaps I will put up a brass to the old fellow yet,' thought Max Mervyn, after they had bidden the house and its master farewell, and were poking about among the monuments in the church. 'But I shall just have to go and find out if Katie is convinced that Wickham's a rascal.'

He went back to Ingleby on the next morning, and went to the Vicarage with the excuse of inquiring for Miss Vyner, and in the course of an interview with Katie, which, as usual, was on the edge of a quarrel, he found out that Wickham, as he afterwards said, 'had answered to the name of Randall.'

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE LAST CHANCE.

ON the last day of the old year the shareholders in the Kirkton, Ousely and Flete Dale Coal Company met once more in the dining-room of Ingleby Mill House, having been summoned together to see the old report on the coal-seams of 1859, to compare it with that recently made by Mr. Jasper Wickham,

and to decide upon the expediency of employing a new specialist to make a fresh report on the subject.

Mr. Raby was, as before, in the chair, and after a very few words called upon Mr. Waynflete to open the proceedings. Guy then stood up, and described the discovery first of the endorsed lease of Lady Well, and then of the actual report of 1859, among the papers left by Mr. Thomas Palmer. He had, he said, thought it right, as his own interests were so greatly affected by it, at once to make his discovery known. He had considered it due to Mr. Wickham to let him see the papers first, and together they had decided to lay the matter before Mr. Raby, Mr. Wickham being at once desirous that another opinion should be taken. Personal anxiety and the approach of Christmas had made him delay in summoning the meeting, but here were the documents laid upon the table for the shareholders to examine.

In the midst of an astonished silence Mr. Matthew Palmer rose up and said that he was not at all surprised to find it so. Old Mr. Thomas was not a man to talk of his own affairs, and had never mentioned the report, but his opinion had been well known, and when he and Mrs. Waynflete had bought the farms joining the Waynflete estate the sums paid had been calculated on the understanding that the mining rights were of no value.

‘That is so,’ said Guy briefly, and Mr. Greenaway echoed, ‘That’s so, but Mr. Wickham’s report must be taken into account until it is definitely rejected by the shareholders.’

‘What’s Mr. Wickham’s own opinion now he has seen the old report?’ said old Mat Palmer curiously. ‘Will he undertake to defend his opinion?’

‘No,’ said Wickham, ‘not till the other report is made.’

Then Mr. Raby, granting fully the necessity for obtaining another opinion before they could come before the public, declared that as far as he was himself concerned, his confidence in Mr. Wickham’s skill and science was unabated. He felt convinced that the report on which they were now acting would be vindicated by the new one, and that the company would be enabled to proceed on the lines already laid down for it.

‘I understand,’ said Mr. Greenaway—‘I have grounds for understanding, that Mr. Waynflete does not share that conviction?’

'I think,' said Guy, 'that it is out of place to express convictions until the new report is made. I have said that I consider one to be necessary. The question before us is to what firm will the Company apply? But I think, perhaps, the time is come when it will be well for me to state that I have no right to an opinion. The whole of the Waynflete property is in the act of passing out of my hands; I have received and accepted an offer for it from Mr. Greenaway, of Elton Hall. I cannot say I have no interest in the matter, as in the event of the mining rights proving of value I shall receive an equivalent for them, but Mr. Greenaway is the virtual holder of the shares representing Fletehead and Lady Well, and not myself.'

Every shade of colour left Guy's face as he made this statement; but he spoke in a clear, quiet voice without any hesitation, and there was a sensation through all the meeting, which almost caused the question on hand to be forgotten.

Pictures on the wall were not likely to attract the attention of business men a little uneasy about their business, but as old Mat Palmer looked across at Guy as this statement fell on his ears, he saw, over the chimney-piece behind him a portrait which he remembered there in former years. Mr. Thomas had had his wife's likeness taken during his life, and Guy had removed it to Waynflete Hall. It had now come back to its old quarters.

Wickham, whose glances had been restless and roving, had noticed at once that the head of the unfortunate Guy, with wistful eyes and uncertain lips, which he had seen in the octagon room at Waynflete, now hung over the sideboard at Ingleby. He thought, too, that in the different light much of the peculiarity of the expression was gone.

'You wouldn't say now,' thought Wickham, 'that he saw ghosts.'

In the midst of the astonished silence which followed on Guy's communication Maxwell Mervyn stood up. He looked straight at Mr. Raby, and his tones were of the kind that command attention.

'Mr. Chairman,' he said, 'I have a statement to make which will, perhaps, make it unnecessary to continue the matter of the Coal Company at all. We may not need to wait even for another report to dissolve ourselves. At least we shall know where we are before going further. We may find that the report on which we have been acting may be torn up as waste

paper, without the expense or trouble of getting it confirmed or contradicted. I call on Mr. James Randall, known to us here as Jasper Wickham, to explain why he has passed under a false name, and to prove that the certificates he has produced and under which he is acting are better than so much waste paper. Stop a bit, gentlemen,' as a murmur began to rise and a movement went through the meeting, 'I haven't completed my statement. I've made it now because I don't see why there should be any loophole for escape for a detected impostor. I found out the fact through an accident, as to which I'm not going to mention names, and I wrote to a friend of mine in the City (there's never any saying where a good connection may come in) to ask if Randall was a name known to him. Gentlemen, it was very well known indeed eight or nine years ago, being borne by a fraudulent trustee who escaped justice by some kind of cooked-up arrangement which never ought to have been made. He had a son, an engineer, who disappeared; but a man out in the States, acting for a firm of brokers, came across him under the name of Wickham four or five years ago, and had tales to tell not much to his credit. I could tell tales of him also if I chose. I maintain that he deliberately tried to cheat me about the worth of my shares in Ousely, and the worth of his own, which he wanted me to buy, thinking me a young greenhorn. I consider it a public duty to unmask a swindler, and I'm prepared to prove my statements.'

There was a pause, but a hubbub of voices could hardly have been fuller of emotion and disturbance. Wickham had sprung to his feet and faced Max as he spoke, with eyes that were as full of passion as of shame. Guy looked straight at Wickham in silence. Voices began to rise, but old Mr. Raby, very pale and hardly able to control his voice, stood up and said—

'Mr. Jasper Wickham will now reply, and I desire that he shall have a hearing.'

'One moment,' said Guy. 'Mr. Wickham confided his family history to me, of which much is to his personal credit. We have no right to visit the sins of the father on the son.' He leaned over the table and looked intently at Wickham.

'My certificates,' said Wickham, 'are perfectly correct. My examinations were passed in England before I changed my name. Mr. Raby did not ask to see the certificates, but took

me on recommendations from Canada and the States given me as Jasper Wickham ; you can wire to the references if you like. My real name is James Jasper Randall. I took an *alias* because I did not want to be known as my father's son. I defy any one to pick a hole in the work I have done for Mr. Raby. If another of my trade writes me down an incapable fool, I must put up with it, but I deny I'm a worse engineer as Jasper Wickham than as James Randall. My family history has nothing to do with the matter.'

'I cannot see that it has,' said Mr. Raby. 'We have to deal with Mr. Wickham's capabilities on their own merits.'

'No one,' said Mr. Greenaway, 'can suppose that Mr. Wickham is an incapable fool ! But will he stake his professional reputation on that report there before us ? Will he endorse it now, and show us where Fisher of Dewsbury is mistaken ?'

'I refuse to say a word on the subject,' said Wickham, sitting down and leaning back in his chair.

Every one except Guy began to speak at once, till Mr. Raby's voice rose above the hubbub.

'Gentlemen, this meeting was called to consider to what firm of engineers we should apply for a second opinion on the subject of this report. It was not called to inquire into the personal character or the family circumstances of Mr. James Wickham. If it had been, no one is bound in law to incriminate himself. The meeting is adjourned till to-morrow, at the same hour, when we can consider our further acts.'

'I move an amendment,' said Mr. Greenaway, 'that we continue the meeting now, but that Mr. Jasper Wickham, otherwise Mr. James Randall, be requested to withdraw.'

Wickham got up, bowed to Mr. Raby, and walked out of the room, and then ensued a hot discussion, Mr. Greenaway declaring that Wickham had rendered himself liable to a charge of endeavouring to obtain money under false pretences, Maxwell Mervyn putting in in more detail the 'damaging facts' which he had obtained from his friend as to Wickham's Canadian career, which Mr. Raby ruled to be off the point, while cautious old Matthew Palmer, perhaps not altogether inclined to side with elements so new as Greenaway and Mervyn, said that no one could prove, first, until the new report was made, that the present one was worthless, whatever they might think ; secondly, that it was impossible to prove

that any man was not an ignorant fool, supposing the new expert declared against it, and thirdly, that no one, owing to Mr. Waynflete's prompt action, had lost a farthing ; therefore Mr. Raby might be left to deal with his manager's character as he thought fit.

Guy had sat the discussion out in silence. He could not defend Wickham, and he would not attack him, and he was withheld from contributing the fact that Wickham was pledged to pay off his father's liabilities, because he felt that the extreme need of money would be a damaging fact in the eyes of the excited shareholders. He would have liked to knock Max Mervyn down, yet every word the latter had said was true and justifiable, while his own influence on Wickham—where was it, and what had it done ?

The meeting was at length adjourned till the next day, and the gentlemen went off in groups, discussing the situation. Mr. Raby touched Guy on the shoulder and said—

'I'll have a word with you,' and Guy took him into the library.

Then Wickham rose up from a seat by the fire and began to speak at once.

'Mr. Raby,' he said, 'I did not take the "opportunity of repentance," of telling my own story with a grace which Waynflete gave me, but I'll make my confession now. All the facts which Mr. Mervyn has ferreted out are correct, and more. Moreover, I *did* cook the report on the Ousely and Flete Dale coal seams ; Mr. Fisher, of Dewsbury, is perfectly right. My motive was this: I wanted a round sum down for my shares from Mervyn, and a commission on others that I got for him, more than a continual salary. When I had got that I meant to leave the neighbourhood on the best excuse I could find, and as the shaft on your estate would have been sunk first and would have proved profitable, it must have been a long while before the fraud could be discovered. Very possibly I might have been able to find out that I had overlooked some matter of importance. I have served *you*, sir, well and fairly. You have behaved to me like a gentleman, and the Christmas dinner which I ate at your table put me to shame. However, the game's up and the cards are on the table. Mervyn has unmasked me, it's perfectly true.'

There was something in this sensational speech, whether it were confession or defiance, which cooled the partisanship



which Max's independent action had roused in Mr. Raby's breast. It did not seem to him becoming that a man should write himself down a scoundrel in characters so plain. As he slowly realised what Wickham's conduct amounted to, he grew more and more stern in look and manner, though his words were as merciful as he knew how to make them.

'Your feelings, sir, are between yourself and your Maker. I deeply regret to be forced to change the good opinion I have always held of you. I shall consider the best way to terminate the relations between us, the way, I mean, which will make it most possible for you to make a fresh beginning elsewhere. Guy, I will see you later.'

He took up his hat and went away.

'He'd have liked me better if I'd gone on lying,' said Wickham. 'If I had stuck to my colours at first, I could have carried him and the whole lot of fools with me !'

'Well,' said Guy, slowly, 'I did all I could to save you from doing that.'

'Yes,' said Wickham, 'you succeeded.'

There was a growing agitation and trouble in his manner. He did not know how to bear himself, and his nerves were breaking down. He sat still looking into the fire.

'Waynflete,' he said, after a minute, 'I'm ruined, stonebroke, inside and outside.'

'Yes,' said Guy, laying a hand on his wrist. 'Now what next ?'

'What next ? I can't put on a hair shirt and go on a pilgrimage and expiate my sins. It must have been comparatively easy to whitewash yourself when it could be done in a white sheet.'

'You're the sort of man that might have worn a white sheet,' said Guy, 'or you wouldn't have worked to pay your father's debts and to keep him and your mother.'

Guy did not say the word 'mother' with any intention. He had never known his mother and the word worked no spell for him ; but in the excitement of Wickham's nerves it touched and shook him.

'Did I hear you say you *had* sold Waynflete ?' he said suddenly.

'Yes,' said Guy. 'After all that's quite bearable. You've got it in you to do much harder things, and I suppose you'll have harder things to do. You can do them.'

'Well,' said Wickham, getting up. 'I'll go and think matters

over. Goodbye for the present. I'll get back to my rooms, I'm dead beat.'

He went hastily away, and Guy turned into the inner room, quite as much in need of rest and reflection. He heard voices, however, as he opened the door, and there stood Max Mervyn with his back to the fire, evidently giving Cuthbert Staunton an account of his action.'

'I'd every right to expose the man who was cheating me, and I set my brains to work till I found out how to do it,' he was saying.

'You had every right,' said Guy, 'but what set you on the track? And why did you bring the whole thing out without a warning in public?'

'To make sure he didn't wriggle out of it,' said Max. 'I shouldn't have thought so much about him if I hadn't seen the way he was going on at—at the Vicarage. Then, when I found he'd answered to another name, I was sure I'd got him, and by luck I hit upon a man that knew about him. He's a pretty bad lot. Old Greenaway says I've a head on my shoulders, and I hate underhandedness. I wish I could have made you a bid for Waynflete. I thought so the other day when I was over there with those girls.'

'The pretty heiresses?' said Cuthbert curiously. 'Very pleasant companions, no doubt.'

'Yes,' said Max, a new expression coming into his face. He scratched his head ruefully for a moment, and got red. 'I'm going over there for a New Year's dance to-morrow. I don't expect *Wickham* 'll be one of the company.'

'Well!' said Cuthbert, as Max departed. 'I always *did* prefer the swindlers to Sherlock Holmes!'

'You're not fair,' said Guy, frowning. 'It was a swindle. Mervyn was within his rights. If he sits in old Attorney Maxwell's chair, it won't be by Attorney Maxwell's methods!'

'Will he? As Prince-Consort perhaps?'

'I don't know. Well'—throwing himself wearily into a chair—'at least *you* won't rob the British Museum, or forge the burnt MSS. of the "Faëry Queene"——'

'You liked Wickham?'

'Not exactly,' said Guy, 'but I understood him. I don't want him to go under.'

Late that evening a note was brought to Guy, which he pulled open with haste, and read—

'DEAR WAYNFLETE,—The situation here is impossible even for a day. I am going to the old man. I cannot say he is not worthy to be called my father now, and it is eight years since I shook the dust of his house off my feet. I shall try to gain a little time in the matter I told you of. I sha'n't starve. I have always had a string to my bow across the water. I should like, even yet, to discuss over a pipe the "source of the message" you brought to me when you found the endorsed lease. The wisest and most helpful being I ever saw will perhaps set *some* of my wrong-doings right. She will need no asking. To you I am not ungrateful.

'Yours,

'J. J. RANDALL.

'I have never spent so happy a year as with Mr. Raby.'

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### THE MAIN CHANCE.

OH, Guy, to think that I did not know! That you had all that to do and to bear, and I couldn't hear or speak a word! Somehow I did know, but I had to *put off* knowing. Oh, when you came and told me you were well and minded nothing now I was better, and that Cuthbert looked after you and took care of you, Guy, there was a little trouble down at the bottom of my heart, and I knew poor Cuthbert would find you very hard to look after!

'Well,' said Guy, after a little laugh, 'I think selling Waynflete and smashing up the Coal Company was a sort of relief. Yes, it did divert one's mind.'

'But now,' said Florella—'now? Tell me what really happened. You know, somehow, I've never felt as if it were all *settled*, finished, about Waynflete. But oh, Guy, it was hard.'

'When it was done,' said Guy, 'and I saw my way to pull the business clear, I knew that after all I cared most for that. That's my work. After all, Ingleby is home. Besides, every day I heard you were better.'

He was sitting by the sofa on which she still lay, and as he

looked down into her eyes there was no lack of joy in his own. She knew now all that had taken place, but this was the first time they had really talked fully to each other though the new year was a fortnight old.

'And now,' she said, in her sweet, steady tones, 'tell me the real things. Tell me about yourself.'

Then he poured out his heart to her, and in the light of her eyes he read the story clear. And she had said it was quite simple. All the upshot of it was doing right. He had come to see that the victory for him meant giving up Waynflete, not keeping it. 'Though I think Aunt Margaret was right in getting it back. That was the natural victory that came first before the spiritual. And then the conviction—you showed me that—that I must reach the heart of the enemy, bring him over. Nothing less would do.'

'Florella,' he continued, 'if all these experiences hadn't happened to me, I should have cared for nothing but getting on in the world. Wickham accounted for them, Cuthbert regards them as a craze; but they have brought the message of the Lord to me. I have been made aware of the relations of souls to each other—of the Forces that move the world. Nothing, I think, has happened to me that does not happen to all. Only I have been made to *know what was going on*. And as for the forms in which they have come to my eyes or to my mind—I daresay they are of this world, as I am—I've heard in my own tongue in which I was born. We Waynfletes have had just the same temptations or tempters as other people; our curse, nay, our blessing, has been seeing them at work. Good instead of evil is all the outcome of them.'

'But that,' said Florella, 'is all the outcome of the Cross of Christ.'

They were silent for a minute, and then she said—

'You understand now what I meant about not knowing *when to leave off seeing*. I have been so much happier since you took me into the blessing, even when you thought it was a curse. Guy, I saw too that we had to make Mr. Wickham change his mind. You see Max Mervyn only thought of finding him out.'

'Oh, but Mervyn was quite justified,' said Guy; 'that had to be done, only I wanted him to find himself out. He's a queer fellow. Honour and dishonour! His repayment was a splendid thing, but he took it out in using any sort of means,

and comforting himself with any kind of pleasure. We mustn't let him slip out of our minds. If he gets time given him, as I think he will, he'll pull his affairs straight, and I don't think he'll cross the line again.'

'I think,' said Florella, producing a letter, 'that I might let you read this.'

'FLOY, MY BELOVED,—You can read letters now, and I suppose you are posted up in all that has taken place, and know all that came to pass through your danger. Floy, I give in about the "man in Yorkshire." He's nearly good enough for you, but I don't believe he loves you as much as I do, and when I heard you were perhaps dying I simply couldn't keep at a distance. You didn't know about my coming then. It was preposterous, but why not? I didn't think of anything but having a shorter time to wait for news. And then you know I saw Jim, and betrayed him like a fool, and the other little idiot betrayed him again—well, it served him right for having made a fool of her. That was after I went back to London, when you were safe. And one night he came and told me all about it, and said you and your Guy had behaved to him like angels, that you were unaccountable altogether. But, Floy, I don't think *he's so bad for a fiend*. He's done a good piece of work for poor old uncle. "Half a Hero," isn't he? Well, those people gave him another year for his last payment, indeed they paid him handsome compliments on his conduct. And he went over to Hyères, and some time you shall see poor Auntie's letter about him. Bygones are bygones. And now he's off again to Canada, where he's got a chance with his old connection. Things aren't smooth for him there, I believe, but I suppose he'll pull through. What happened to him, Floy? Did you and your Guy "cure him by suggestion"? Ah, I think you know I'd like to go and scrub and darn for him, and be a door-mat for him, but I doubt if that'll ever be. He'll begin fresh. Get well, my darling, and let me see you again soon.

'YOUR MOLLY.'

'Ah!' said Guy, with a long breath, 'he doesn't deserve that kind of devotion.'

'Perhaps, though, that's the way the message will come to him,' said Florella. 'But Molly will be satisfied with knowing

about him after years of ignorance. Oh, Guy, I think ours are not really bad troubles ! And you know *I* like Ingleby. I shall make the Mill House artistic without spending a farthing.'

'I believe you can !' said Guy. 'There won't be much to spend on it ; but I see my way now—I shall be able to have the improvements at the Mill, which are necessary before I can hope for any sort of profit, and right, too, for all the workers. If I could find any one now with a little capital and some wits, who would come in as a partner, I think we might hope for reasonable returns.'

'I suppose Godfrey—— ?'

'No, Godfrey has no such wish. I thought it right to send him a wire before I agreed to sell the old place, and he wired back "Glad to hear it." No, I had thought of Mervyn. He has a good hard head for business, and it's just about the size of thing which he could reach to. But I fancy he has more attractive offers elsewhere.'

'I think Max Mervyn has a much warmer heart and better feelings than he knows,' said Florella thoughtfully.

'Little Miss Fielding has thrown a chance away,' said Guy, and as he spoke there were sounds of tea, and Katie came into the room. Behind the tea-cups she looked very small and white and subdued. All her dreams had been scattered. Wickham, who loved her and was her hero, did not exist. He had treated her so ill, had wounded her pride and her love so deeply that she could not refuse credit to the tale of his misdeeds. The torrent swept over her and tore up her poor little passion by the roots, leaving waste places behind it. Mrs. Lennox had been so justifiably angry, thinking of the girls. Mr. Lennox had talked to her so kindly, but, as she put it, so dreadfully ; Laura had behaved so well, but it is so difficult at fourteen to carry off prettily the knowledge of behaving better than one's governess, that Katie was beaten down to the earth. Max was at Elton Hall, Florella shut up in her room ; she had brought it all on herself. There was nothing for it but to go away and be a lady-help !

But when Florella, tender and shrewd and wise, was once more attainable, matters mended. She gave much hope to Katie, and none at all to Katie's love-story which she unromantically declared had got to be got over and killed dead, and was not the sort of thing to be gone on with and

cherished in secret in a one-sided way. No, it wasn't meant to *be*, the brave thing was to stop it and begin again; Katie must be more of a person, and not less, for it. No, even bitterness and hatred should not be dwelt upon, either of herself or of him. It was very natural she should have cared for him, and she had owned to having done wrong about it; now she must start fresh.

She built up the poor child's lost self-respect with a cunning and gentle hand, and helped to settle about the training college, which was a cheerful and pleasant place where all sorts of domestic arts were taught as well as science and languages, and where, in a week or two, Katie was to go.

No, she said to Mrs. Lennox, she hadn't exactly tried to make Katie see her faults, she wanted a fresh start; as she grew she would find them out.

So Katie managed to hold up her head and to pour out the tea, and say little nothings to Guy and to Cuthbert, who presently came in with Mrs. Lennox. And as the young men looked at her they both thought that poor Wickham had had a great deal of excuse, but that he deserved all that had come upon him for playing fast and loose with her.

A heart that is capable of generous and unselfish admiration is never wholly without happiness, and Katie felt less miserable as, in answer to a remark of Cuthbert's on Florella's rapid recovery, she looked at her and then at Guy, and said, with a sigh, but with all her heart—

'Oh, isn't it a beautiful thing to see them look so happy?'

Cuthbert followed her look. 'Yes,' he said, 'it's a good thing to see. They both deserve it.'

He sighed a little, too, and hoped this pretty little girl would not always have to look at happiness through other folks' eyes. That, no doubt, lengthens the sight, but strains it.

A fiery and personal red dyed Katie's cheeks the next moment, as Mr. Mervyn was announced.

Max came in very polite and cordial, but in his heart a little anxious too. It was his first visit since he had learned James Randall's name from Katie, and he secretly wondered how she would behave to him. She was very quiet and stiff, and when she had offered him tea, went away, saying to Cuthbert that she must go back to the schoolroom.

It was her little way of showing that she wanted to be good and quiet, but Max thought she was angry with him, and got

no satisfaction out of his descriptions of the grand doings at Elton Hall.

But on the day before Katie went away to her new life at college Max came to wish her goodbye.

'Katie,' he said solemnly, 'I want to tell you that I've made up my mind as to my future career. I've been talking to Waynflete, and he's willing and I'm willing. I've inquired carefully into the prospects of the business, and I think of putting some of my capital into it and going into partnership with him. I've looked about me, and I know the size of things as I didn't at first. I won't allude to the coal, that, you know, is all my eye, though I suppose old Raby'll sink another pit at Ingleby when he gets another manager, but, as I say, I won't refer to coal, it might annoy you if I did. But I see a little into the woollen trade, and I can come into it on fair terms, and that's what I'm thinking of doing.'

'I thought,' said Katie, 'that *perhaps* you might be Mr. Greenaway's partner at Rilston.'

'No,' said Max, looking into his hat, 'it's not for me to say what I might have done in that way. A man must look to the main chance, I've often said. But there are ways that are fair and square, and ways that are not, as we've seen, though I won't allude to them. I mean always to be on the square as to feelings as well as facts. Perhaps you may have heard rumours—of my intentions in that quarter. Well, I've come on purpose to tell you they haven't any foundation. If ever I'm master of Waynflete, as I don't deny I've often thought I should like to be, I'll buy it myself if I can get it, and if not I'll build myself a house at Ousely. In the meantime I'm going to live in the house behind the Mill, where old Mr. Thomas first set up housekeeping. That's what I wanted to tell *you*. I shall get settled in so as to look after things when Waynflete goes on his wedding tour at Easter. As you're going away, I came to tell you you'll find me here when you come back. Then I shall be able to tell you how I'm getting on.'

Katie hoped decorously that he would get on well, but her heart gave a little warm throb. Old Mr. Thomas's house, and Florella at the Mill House, and good old Max, who had always stood by her, and whose history was as straight and square as his nice old face. Of course, she never could——



But some one would be glad to see her when she came back for the holidays, and that would make it seem like coming home. Max would not marry Mr. Greenaway's heiress.

So Maxwell Mervyn, as well as Guy Waynflete, settled on the Main Chance in life, and pursued it faithfully, according to the light given to him.

*(Concluded.)*

## *FROM MY ATTIC WINDOW.*

---

**Living  
Bridges—  
Anomalies  
and Mrs.  
Lynn Linton.** WHEN men or women die at even the moderately old age of seventy, it is very strange to think oneself back into their childhood, to find how they touch history on the one hand, and are still in the middle of the modern life of to-day on the other. They are living bridges by which we can climb backward into history. Take, for instance, Mrs. Lynn Linton, who was seventy-six when last summer she caught a cold and died very quickly. The names of friends and acquaintances she made as a child are names famous, but still only names, in literary history to us. There was Tom Moore, who to me seems to belong to another era, a time when poetry and the pot-house were inseparably united. Yet Miss Linton, as she was at the time, met him and his big, handsome wife, whom he scandalously illtreated, in Bath society. Mrs. Schimmelpennick, the preacher of Quietism, was a childish memory, as was Jane Porter, the author of 'The Scottish Chiefs,' and the two Miss Stricklands, who had a certain literary fame. Of them Mrs. Linton said that Elizabeth did all the toiling, the hunting up and searching out at the British Museum, while Agnes got all the fame. Then, too, she knew, but did not like, George Eliot. She thought her 'underhand and provincial, badly dressed, unwashed, unbrushed, unkempt, and conceited.'

And the anomaly is that this woman, who was really of the old world, lived in, though she was not of, the new. She who knew Tom Moore was a most brilliant modern journalist. She was writing leaders for the *Morning Chronicle* before Miss Martineau did the same for the *Daily News*. But Mrs. Lynn Linton was full of anomalies. After reading one of her diatribes against some phase of life, full of scorn, sarcasm, and polysyllables—datribes which were really full of pointed eloquence, one expected to meet a fierce, muscular, loud-voiced person of the style of the early caricatures of the new woman. Instead one met a little lady, full of old-world courtesy, with a gentle, low voice, anxious that her guest should not overtire herself, above all, that she should not go about without an escort or a chaperon. Another anomaly in Mrs. Linton's career was the apparent wide divergence between her theories and her practice. She was savagely angry at the decision of the Courts in 1891 over the Clitheroe case, when it was decided that a man could not carry off his wife and imprison her in his own house against her will. In a characteristic *Nineteenth Century* article she wrote: 'Now wives may not only dance in, but dance off, their slack chains to a merry tune. A wife may now break her marriage vows and play ninepins with her duties.' And more, much more, to the same effect. And yet Mrs. Lynn Linton lived in one continent and her husband, by mutual agreement, in another. And also, in that same article, she contended that drunkenness, insanity, and felony ought to be legal grounds of divorce. Further, she made a violent onslaught on all woman's 'emancipatory' movements in general, especially on moral reformers, whom she designated the 'shrieking sisterhood,' and whom she fiercely attacked for publishing facts which she contended ought to be kept quiet. Yet withal she protested much against the theory that fiction ought to be written solely for the young person.

\* \* \* \* \*

**A White Queen in West Africa.** An extraordinary story of the influence of a white lady living alone in West Africa is told by Captain Alan Boisragon in his story of the Benin massacre. After describing some of the horrible cruelties of the Niger Coast Protectorate, amongst others the custom of killing all children born twins, and driving the mother out into the wilds to die from exposure and starvation, Captain Boisragon

tells the wonderful story of heroism and courage of Miss Slessor, one of the lady missionaries from the Scotch Mission at Old Calabar. She has settled herself in a district called Okyon, some way inland from the Calabar river. And of that district she is virtually queen, as in it her word is law, and the natives, who adore her, do nothing without consulting her. She has taught herself to speak the language of the country as well as any native, and knows far more about the history and relationship of all the different chiefs of that part of the world than any one of the natives themselves. She has got such a hold over the people that all killing of twins and such like evil customs have been absolutely stopped. When twins are born, Ua, as Miss Slessor is called by her people, is at once sent for. By washing the house and all its contents herself she is considered to have repurified it, and is allowed to save the woman and take the babies back to her own house—a house, by the way, that she has more or less built with her own hands. All this she has done entirely by herself in a very large district where not many years ago there was nothing but disorder and trouble.

Another tribute to this remarkable woman is from Miss Mary Kingsley in her 'Travels in West Africa.' She says: 'I made a point in this visit to Calabar of going up river to see Miss Slessor at Okyon. This very wonderful lady has been eighteen years in Calabar, for the last six or seven living entirely alone, as far as white folks go, in a clearing in the forest near to one of the villages in the Okyon district, and ruling as a veritable white chief over the entire Okyon district. Her great abilities, both physical and intellectual, have given her among the savage tribe an unique position, and won her a profound esteem. Her knowledge of the native, his language, his ways of thoughts, his diversities, his difficulties, and all that is his, is extraordinary, and the amount of good she has done no man can fully estimate. Okyon, when she went there alone—living in the native houses while she built with native assistance her present house—was a district regarded with fear by other natives and unknown to Europeans. This instance of what one white can do would give many important lessons in West Coast administration, only the sort of man Miss Slessor represents is rare. There are but few who have the same power of resisting the malarial climate, and of acquiring the language and an insight into the negro mind, so perhaps after all it

is no great wonder that Miss Slessor stands alone, as she certainly does.'

\* \* \* \* \*

**A Strange Map.** And this Scotchwoman has been living and working in this wonderful way for the last eighteen years, and most of us knew nothing about it. Perhaps the world is fuller of such quiet, strenuous workers than we dream. It is, I suppose, time that if the wickedness of one great city were revealed in its naked ugliness we should stand aghast at the sight. But I am sure that if all the quiet goodness, the noiseless heroism of this world were brought to light we should be equally surprised. Suppose a map could be prepared with a small white spot wherever a man or a woman was quietly and without ostentation living life out for the benefit of his fellows and the glory of his God. And put into that map also more white spots for the lives which are as really heroic, but are cramped and stifled and choked into small rooms by small circumstances. What surprises we should have! I seem to see that map as I look out of my window on the broad sun-flecked fields and the cloud-dimpled moorland. There would be some white spots where some of those cottages are I know. For here lives a woman who has given up her life—which might have had a good deal of the joy that comes to beautiful womanly women—to caring for her querulous, paralysed brother, and sharing her money with him. And beyond is a boy who wanted to be a sailor, and gave up the longing of his life to please his mother, for she was a widow. And away in the heart of China I know many places where such white spots would be, to say nothing of houses in the Mile End Road, and more than one, I suspect, in most unlikely places nearer home. Oh, there are surprises ahead when we get where goodness, and not wealth or learning, will be the standard by which we shall be measured! Meantime it is cheering to think how thickly spotted that map of ours would be.

\* \* \* \* \*

**A High School for Chinese Girls.** Who can measure the magnitude of the sign in the East which has taken the form of a girls' school in China, a sort of High School started by the Chinese themselves? It was startling to find a girls' school started by a Christian missionary some years ago in the very heart of China, where girls to the number of fifty or sixty were

allowed by their parents to live and unbind their feet, learn of Christianity as well as have a normal education. But this school just opened in Shanghai has been founded on the initiative of a Chinese gentleman and is worked under a council quite international. This is a sign that the big yellow race, whom acute observers say is destined to overrun and rule over all the East, is doing more than stirring in its sleep. It is yawning. More—it is awaking. The education of its women is never attempted by a sleeping nation.

The following extracts from an account of its opening was sent me from Shanghai by a lady who was present. Of course it must be remembered that this is not a school for teaching Christianity. Native religions, if any, will be included in the curriculum. That, one cannot yet change. She says :—

‘Turning off to the left from the long green avenue but a few minutes before arriving at the Arsenal, the visitor comes upon the pretty conglomeration of buildings in which the much-talked-of Chinese young ladies’ school has now actually been opened. There are the usual Chinese courtyards with somewhat more than the usual fantastic Chinese decoration, ornamental tiles making open screens rather than walls through which the wind can blow freely, yet at the same time giving a feeling of privacy, and writhing dragons and birds and beast. It is quite Chinese, and very pretty and æsthetic. But the windows are foreign, and there is no house in the Settlement more airy, nor perhaps so clean.

‘But the matter of interest was not the building, nor the furniture, but the teachers and the taught. There they stood, the sixteen young girls, who are the first promise of the regeneration of China, and, judged as young girls, they certainly promised remarkably well. It is natural to suppose that several of them are the children of parents of more than ordinary enlightenment. But whether they are or not, they certainly looked it. Their manners were naturally very superior to those of the girls one is accustomed to see in Chinese schools. They were readier to laugh and see a joke. But if some of those girls do not decidedly distinguish themselves in the years to come, it will be the fault of their instructors, or I am no physiognomist. They were busy with reading-books, and the teacher, a nice quiet-looking Chinese woman, had not the least idea of showing them off,—so it was hard to test them. She said she could not say yet herself which were the brightest girls. Several had natural feet, and most of the others were eager to state they had “let out” their feet. None were the least smartly dressed, but several had very well-dressed hair, and were very neatly shod. One girl had the Manchu shoe without that objectionable heel in the middle, that must make walking on it like walking upon stilts.

‘The bedrooms were all upstairs, four girls in a room, and nothing could have looked cleaner and neater than the arrangements, white mosquito curtains round the bed, a box under each for the girl’s clothes, a stool for

her to sit upon ; one shining wardrobe amongst the four ; a washstand with rail at the back on which to hang towels, and a looking-glass in the centre. The teachers had rooms to themselves. The teacher of sewing was upstairs with only too exquisitely fine work, all ready to spoil the poor girls' eyes and exercise their patience. One of Miss Haygood's pupils is to come in on Monday and begin teaching English, as they think a Chinese teacher will do for a beginning. Probably she will understand Chinese difficulties better than any of us could. But it is a question whether her pronunciation can be quite satisfactory.

'A good deal of the furniture was foreign, and it seemed to be all foreign in the long reception-room, perhaps to be eventually used as a class-room, where on Wednesday, the 1st of June, a large company of foreign ladies sat down to a most excellent Chinese dinner, with knives and forks for those who wanted.

'The two previous days gentlemen have been received, and 2nd of June was exclusively for Chinese ladies. One of the daughters of Mr. King, manager of the Telegraphs, presided at one end of the table at which I was, and his daughter-in-law sat at the other end. There was another table in an adjoining room. Mrs. Shen Tun-ho and Mrs. King Lein-shan have had cards printed in English with "Chinese Girl School Committee" in the corner. Mrs. Mei Shenin has on hers : "Native Director of Chinese Female School."

'Every detail seemed to have been well seen after. Even baths and a bath-room are provided. Each girl is only to pay three dollars a month, and this being so it is not to be wondered at that already another house is being secured, and there are promises of sufficient girl pupils already to fill it. There is also talk of opening another girls' school at Hongkew. So many people have said this school would never be opened, it is not surprising that now they say it will not last long.'

\* \* \* \* \*

**Waning  
Summer and  
Wasted  
Sunshine.** Week after week and month after month I have watched the summer signs. They came in an extravagance of loveliness, they are going in a luxury of colour. I watched moorland growing golden for the spring, and now I see it grown purple for the autumn. And I know that summer is turning round to wave a last goodbye. There are some folk I am told who do not feel glad when the summer comes or sad when it goes. This I cannot understand. The beauty of the autumn is full and rich and luscious, but to me it is always sad. And I think part of the sadness comes from the sense of waste. There were so many hours of the summer sunshine I could not enjoy from the pressure of circumstance. So many flowers I could not even see. Summer nights of whose glory one could only drink in a few hours. If—and this is the haunting ghost

—I could only have preserved the loveliness I could not enjoy at the time ! If I could have bottled up the sunshine for use in dreary November ! If I could turn on my wasted sunsets in January or have my mixed flowers in December ! If—but after all the secret of happiness in life is to forget the 'ifs' and extract your sunshine if need be out of November. And meantime there is September and October to let one down gently from midsummer.

ANNIE GROSER HURD.



## The China Cupboard.

ARRANGED BY CHELSEA CHINA.

(For the regulations of all 'Monthly Packet' Competitions, see p. 360.)

### FIRST SHELF.

VARIETY SUBJECT FOR JULY.

Three favourite novels of the last three years, with reasons.

*Proserphina*. 'Malecho,' Miss Lawless ; 'The Mermaid,' Miss Dougall ; 'The Master,' Mr. Zangwill.

*Skena Vav*. 'Sir George Tressady,' 'Phroso,' 'Captains Courageous.'

*Nora*. 'The Sowers,' 'On the Face of the Waters,' 'The King with Two Faces.'

*Fa-ik*. 'On the Face of the Waters,' 'In Kedar's Tents,' 'The Tender Mercies of the Good.'

*Peter*. 'On the Face of the Waters,' 'The Jessamy Bride,' 'Kathleen Clare,' by Dora Inchesny.

*Miranda*. 'Lucilla,' by Alice Spinner ; 'The Ways of Life,' Mrs. Oliphant ; 'The King with Two Faces.'

*Winifred Spurling*. 'In Kedar's Tents,' 'The Jessamy Bride,' 'Simon Dale.'

*Einsam*. 'The Sowers,' 'The Idol Maker,' A. Sergeant ; 'The Well Beloved,' T. Hardy.

*Sea Maiden*. 'The Crook of the Bough,' M. M. Dowie ; 'Soldiers of Fortune,' R. Harding Davis ; 'Pages from the book of Bethia Hadacre.'

*Holly Leaf*. 'The Sowers,' 'Into the Highways and Hedges,' 'The Touchstone of Life.'

'The Sowers' is the favourite book, and H. Merriman the favourite author. 'On the Face of the Waters' comes next, and Miss Mary Coleridge's 'King with Two Faces' has two votes. The lists are very various and evidently quite genuine. Chelsea China cannot well assign the prize by the choice of the books, as tastes differ, and she has not read quite all those named. One or two are hardly *novels*. Excluding 'Captains Courageous,' as being more of a boy's story, her own choice would be 'Sir George Tressady.' 'At the Cross Roads,' by Miss Montresor, and 'On the Face of the Waters.' She thinks that 'The King with Two Faces' has *some* literary qualities which excel all the rest. 'The Sowers' is a fine story, but—she is aware of the heretical quality of this opinion—to her thinking Mr. Merriman's writing invariably contains an element of commonplace sentiment. Probably 'The Master' is one of the finest books named. Critics would give us 'The School for Saints,' probably the 'Well Beloved,' and, perhaps, 'The King with Two Faces.'

Nora's critical writing is so much the best, that she must again take the prize, but Chelsea China adds Fa-ik's very clear paper, though she does not herself care for 'In Kedar's Tents.' The fact that the choices are personal rather than critical, does not detract from the clear writing of the paper.

NAME THE THREE NOVELS PUBLISHED DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS WHICH YOU PREFER, GIVING YOUR REASONS FOR CHOOSING THEM.

Three novels—read within the last three years—stand out in my memory against a confused and variegated background of half-forgotten fiction. Three novels—and two of the three written by women.

The first, taking them in the order in which they were read, is perhaps, if not the most interesting, the most vigorous and definite.

It is the story of two strong men and their work for their fellows—a sad story, for the seed which they sowed is not quickly followed by a joyful reaping. 'In Russia the sowing has only began,' and stories of Russia are apt to be sad.

But there is a freshness, a clean, wholesome manliness about the book which prevent it from being dreary. It would be difficult to find a stronger, simpler hero than the prince, a more lovable character than the stout German cynic, Steinmetz—women more worthy of respect than the English Maggie and the Russian Catrina.

From the first chapter to the last we feel the 'atmosphere' which is always present in a really great book—in this case an atmosphere which suggests wide, limitless spaces, and patient, unquestioning suffering. Hopeless suffering it would almost seem, and yet not altogether hopeless, since another note is struck at the last, when the wretched, voiceless moujik, seeking vengeance upon the prince, turns and falls at the feet of the 'Moscow doctor.' 'It was a mighty harvest. That which is sown in the people's heart bears a thousandfold at last.'

There is, too, in this author a great tenderness for his characters—a quality which is rather reverence for their humanity than the contemptuous tolerance of the cynic for his puppets. Even for the one bad woman of the story—the beautiful Etta—he has, like Steinmetz, a great, large-minded pity. Even the villain, de Chauxville, is not wholly despicable, since there are possibilities in the worst of us. So much for the first book of which I am thinking—'The Sowers,' by Henry Seton Merriman.

The next book is, as its writer calls it, 'a photograph'—that is, 'a picture in which the differentiation caused by colour is left out'—a photograph with the merits and the faults of a photograph, amongst the former a fidelity in matters of detail which few critics have attempted to question; amongst the latter, a want of perspective, a lack of proportion which prevent 'On the Face of the Waters' from being as great a book as it might have been.

In all tales of war there must of necessity be 'a confused noise and garments rolled in blood, burning, and full of fire,' and there certainly is confusion in this story of the most terrible tragedy of the century—confusion, blended with a strain of melancholy which is not exactly pessimism but something almost sadder: a tinge of that oriental fatalism which seems to say that it is hardly worth while to be pessimistic since all life and love, joy and sorrow, are as the 'worldly hopes,' which, whether it turns to ashes or prospers—

'Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,  
Lighting a little hour or two, is gone.'

And yet—so full of contradictions is art as well as life—there are inconsistencies in the book to which its peculiar charm is due, giving us the

courage of the sensualist Major Erlton, the beauty of Tara's devotion, the sweet childhood of 'Sonny Seymour.'

Is it more sad or comforting to note that, while the authoress creates for us such types as Major Erlton and Alice Gissing, she goes to real life for Hodson the brave and gallant, and noblest of all soldier heroes, John 'Nikalseyn'?

Not a pleasant book, assuredly, not altogether a great book, 'On the Face of the Waters' is yet one which no other woman could have written, which cannot be ignored any more than it can be 'enjoyed' in the ordinary acceptance of the word.

The third book is a romance rather than a novel. Very few, I think, of the many readers who have delighted during the last few months in the 'King with Two Faces' will deny its right to rank high among the notable books of 1898.

The authoress has, wonderful to relate, found virgin soil for her experiment. She has gone to a country almost unknown, and introduced her readers to historical personages of whom they had, very possibly, known exceedingly little before.

But this is not all. She has given us a piece of masterly character study in the picture of the king—a human and interesting hero—a suggestion of a charming heroine is poor little Tala, a not too melodramatic villain in Baron Essen.

More than this still, she has transported us out of everyday life, out of the humdrum cynicism, the worn-out passion of *fin-de-siècle* life of literature into the regions of pure romance, into an existence which has not the reality of waking life, but the reality of a vivid dream—a good and wholesome dream, moreover, in which it is worth while to take holiday.—NORA.

1. 'On the Face of the Waters,' by F. A. Steele. It is, as a rule, easy to determine what one likes or dislikes, but often very difficult to give the reasons for one's decisions. With this novel, which I have placed first, however, I am at no loss to find what determined my choice. It is that the story of the book is the story of the Indian Mutiny. For all who have any connection with India, and many, no doubt, who have none, the subject must have a fascination, and the more our knowledge of it grows, so much the more our interest increases. Mrs. Steele tells us the story of the great mistake from the beginning to the end, and from both sides: from rulers and ruled, from East and West. She tells it with a sympathy for all, white and dark alike, to whom the Mutiny came as a chance—perhaps the only chance in life—to show of what stuff they were made. This is the thread which runs through the whole book, the chances that the moving of the Spirit on the Face of the Waters brought to men and the uses that they made of them. The story of the Mutiny must be a sad story, for it is the tale of the price that England paid for her mistakes, and it was the lives of men and women and little children that she gave in payment. But when one reads the story of the bravery and the patience which those dark days brought out in men and women, we can say, as did Jim Douglas, 'I am glad that they had their chance.' They had their chance—whether it came in the deed that won the Victoria Cross, or, as with Nicholson and Jim Douglas, apparent failure and weary waiting.

2. 'In Kedar's Tents,' by H. S. Merriman. Although this is a one-volume novel it partakes of the character of Rudyard Kipling's 'old three-decker' which carries us to the 'Islands of the Blest.' I like it because it is a healthy and thoroughly interesting romance. There is plenty of incident in it, and most of the characters are pleasant and all convincing. The villain is a villain and the hero—the

honest, light-hearted young Englishman—is most satisfactory, and gets into and out of his difficulties in a delightful way. One thoroughly likes Conyngham, and admires General Vincente, though one is most touched, perhaps, by the pathetic figure of the old priest, Father Concha. Hero and heroine are happy, and the villain comes to more or less of a bad end—less than he deserved—and so the book ends in the old-fashioned way, as it should.

3. 'The Tender Mercies of the Good,' by C. Coleridge. I find it more difficult to express my reasons for liking this third book so much. I think it is because it is, as the Fairfords themselves would say, '*quite nice*.' A story that is 'quite nice,' and also very interesting is not always easy to find, and this book fulfils both requirements. It is a bright, wholesome story with a very good moral, and one that is rather apt to be forgotten. The characters are natural—one feels that all through the book. And they are lovable, too, all in their different ways—poor Austin, the black sheep; the old colonel; Agatha, whose life was bound up in Ford; Hilda, with her vague longings and wishes; Amy, and down-right Nancy, and bright, brave Daffodil, who saved two lives from ruin. They are all people one would like to know—they are (I must use the word again) 'so nice.'

FA-1K.

---

#### SUBJECT FOR SEPTEMBER.

Discuss Mrs. Humphrey Ward's 'Helbeck of Bannisdale.'

---

#### SECOND SHELF.

#### CHARACTER STUDY FOR JULY.

##### 'A Maiden of our Own Day.'

These papers are very equal in merit. *Lag-Last* receives the prize, as her paper is clear, and gives a fairly representative type distinctly. *Winifred Spurling's* amusing little skit is given. We should like to know if it has any foundation; in fact, Chelsea China herself thinks that maidens of all days are much more alike than is commonly supposed. There is a fashion in manner, and even in thought, as there is in clothes; but underneath human nature does not alter essentially.

---

##### 'A MAIDEN OF OUR OWN DAY.'

The maiden of our own day may, perhaps, be divided into three classes: first, those who seem to care for nothing but dissipation of the ball and theatre kind and for 'smart' company; secondly, those whose entire sympathies are taken up with purely intellectual occupations; and, finally, those who like most things, whether they be balls or school-treats, political economy or the last novel by Anthony Hope. The last of these classes seems the most attractive to the ordinary person, and as such one instance out of many may be taken to represent a maiden of our own day. She is of average height, and of a figure which may best be described as well grown—that is, she is neither too tall nor too thin, but with a fair-sized waist and a nice straight back. She looks as if she is aware of the use of her limbs, and she carries her head in such a way that any one can see that she is a person of some energy; while her complexion of a nice healthy brown indicates plenty of outdoor exercise. Her hands show pretty plainly that she is fond of sport, for they are well shaped and useful.

looking, but rather large and not beautiful, it being well-nigh impossible to have pretty hands if one goes in for outdoor amusements ; but capable hands are infinitely preferable to pretty ones. Our maiden is often seen in a sailor hat and short skirt, and frequently without gloves, though, as to the latter, she wears them during hockey, as she does not need to emphasise the fact that she plays games thoroughly by having pieces knocked out of those members, for sometimes this is the case during that somewhat violent but very excellent game. Tennis and boating in summer, hockey in winter, and bicycling all the year round—these are the things that keep our maiden healthy and vigorous, and enable her to have that sturdy figure and pleasant complexion. Sometimes, of course, she overdoes it, and then bad temper and apparent laziness is the result ; but one cannot expect absolute wisdom and perfection in a maiden ! And this is not all she does, for she has an active mind in an active body, and likes to keep up with the times, so she is a keen observer of the present-day doings, whether socially or politically, and ‘improves her mind,’ as the phrase goes, by reading sensible books, generally doing that in the mornings, so that afternoons and evenings may be free for social duties and amusements.

Our maiden has little household duties to perform, which she generally manages to finish in the morning, and it is these and the reading that perhaps seem uncongenial after a late evening or a ball the night before. But with another day that feeling wears off, and our maiden is as ready as ever for the fray. She enjoys everything. Even if a call or a party is not very lively, she contrives to get some entertainment out of it, bearing in mind Bishop Creighton’s remark that when he hears anybody say she is dull his mental comment is, ‘*You are dull.*’

Balls are, as they are to most maidens, great delights, but something has to drop if there are many dances running. Vigorous as she is, our maiden cannot play a hockey or long tennis match before a dance, and yet enjoy the latter completely.

So much for amusements, but there is something besides ; there is the Sunday School, and most likely some visiting, besides looking up the children’s parents, to be done, and this must be regular ; and there are calls to be paid with mother, when nice clothes must be donned and longings for something more amusing put away. And our maiden takes some pride in dressing nicely and becomingly ; she does not demean herself by going to call on some elderly lady in a sailor hat and very short cycling skirt, for instance. No ; she likes to array herself suitably, and is by no means in favour of the universal sailor hat and no gloves or one glove for respectability, which some girls think quite enough. Perhaps the maiden of our day may be inclined to be rather too athletic and free ; but, at the same time, it is surely better to be too athletic and too boisterous than to be like so many present-day girls are—*blasé*, languid, and bored, only able to look bright if a man is in sight.

Our active-minded, vigorous maiden of the present day in her sailor hat or in her best clothes is a fascinating person, and may she long remain with us ; and in the future generation let us hope she will still be the healthy, lovable creature that she is now, though naturally there is always room for improvement.—LAG-LAST.

#### A (KITCHEN) MAIDEN OF OUR OWN DAY.

Dear Madcap, with your gaiety of heart, your courage, your sweet unselfishness, your girlish enthusiasms for collections, games, and ‘doing good,’ your fits of indolence when your whole being is absorbed in a novel, followed by pricks of conscience spurring you on to attain knowledge, your prototype may be found in every decade of this century—not so that

of another maiden of our own day, Ida, the kitchenmaid. The latter is a bright-eyed, sharp-featured little personage, totally devoid of old-fashioned respect for her mistress; she airs her opinions with all the freedom of a paying guest. She gave her name as Ida, but as she talks of a sister 'Imy,' probably her name begins with an A. It is curious that such a marvel of erudition should speak so badly. She offered to help the little boys with their Latin; she has learnt French and astronomy.

The other day she mentioned a new accomplishment to her mistress, saying, 'Miss Maud gets on nicely with her droring, don't she, mum?' Then, after a pause, 'But lor! they would think nothink of it where I went to school; we did 'ave to do difficult things. I got the prize for the hantic (antique).'

Her hearer had the curiosity to inquire what the prize was, and was told pensively, 'A droring-board; and mother, she said it would do lovely for pastry, and took it away from me, and I ain't drored since.' She has an inveterate dislike to needlework, and pays an old woman to mend her things. She is extravagant in spending money on her own pleasures; she bought herself a bicycle, but is gradually paying herself back for it by letting it out at a shilling an hour.

Strains of sweet music pervade the house of an evening—it is Ida playing on the jew's-harp; she is evidently musical, as she has made herself a banjo by stretching strings across an old cigar-box. She speaks contemptuously of singing, saying, 'Any one can 'olla.' Her ambition is to perfect herself in her work until she is fit to be a French cook in a nobleman's family.

Being told that making French dishes could not change her nationality, she showed her superior knowledge by stating as a fact that her own brother was earning a large salary as a French cook, adding, 'Things always comes in 'andy; we both learnt French at school—you get more money, and you only 'ave to remember to talk broken Hinglish.' After this, who can say that board-school pupils do not make the most of their advantages?—WINIFRED SPURLING.

#### PRIZE WINNER FOR JULY.

Miss E. Pedder, 9, Somerset Place, Bath.

#### CLASS LIST FOR JULY.

##### CLASS I.

*Dinah Doe, Doronicum, Einsam, Shower Van, Miranda, Peter, Tartar, Truda, Lunatic.*

##### CLASS II.

*Scolland Yard, Thorndyke, Sea Maiden.*

#### SUBJECT FOR SEPTEMBER.

A Hero.

#### WHO, WHEN, AND WHERE?

##### SEARCH QUESTION FOR JULY.

*(A Seasonable Bouquet.)*

1. Where were found 'Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose'?
2. Who had three lilies in her hand and seven stars in her hair?

3. What flower 'goes to bed with the sun and with him rises weeping'?
4. Where are these lines?

'Blue flags, yellow flags, flags all freckled,  
Which will you take, yellow, blue, speckled?  
Take which you will, speckled, blue, yellow,  
Each in its way has not a fellow.'

5. What flowers are described as—

'a tip-toe for a flight,  
With wings of rosy flush o'er delicate white?'

6. Give a favourite quotation about some flower of the month.

#### ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS.

1. In the Garden of Eden. (MILTON'S *Paradise Lost*, book iv. l. 257.)
2. 'The Blessed Damsel.' (D. G. ROSSETTI'S poem of the same name.)
3. The Marigold. (SHAKESPEARE. *Winter's Tale*, act iv. sc. 3.)
4. In July's Speech. (CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S 'The Months: a Pageant.')
5. Sweet peas. (KEATS. 'I stood tip-toe upon a little hill.')
6. As a *favourite* was asked for, equal marks are given, though naturally the quotations vary in poetical merit. Rose and lily are those oftenest chosen (the latter in the lines from 'The Sensitive Plant'), but there are several charming quotations about poppies.

#### MARKS FOR JULY.

60: A. C. R., Apsley Guise, Athena, Clio, Cymraes, Double-Dummy, Einsam, Eleanor, E. T., E. V. B., F. R. D., Helen, Irnham, Isabel, Kittiwake, Klee, Lenore, Melton Mowbray, Scott, Sea Maiden, Sophonisba, The Blue Cat, Thorshaven, Trimmer, W. Adey. 50: Blue Wings, Byrparua, Ellen, Vannin, Green Mantle, Honeylands, Malaprop, Nemo, Proserphina, Syndicate, White Cat, W. Spurling. 40: Cavalier, Findhorn, M. R. A., R. V. H. 30: L. J. H. 20: Peter.

E. V. B. You had not signed your paper, and so got credited under your old name; you lost marks, having given an inadequate explanation of No. 1.

Einsam. Thanks for appreciation. Have you never seen Rossetti's picture, in illustration of his own poem? It is very beautiful.

Fourteen Streams is credited with 70 marks for June.

All-Fours omitted to write 'Search Questions' on her envelope, and cannot be credited.

W. Adey. You only lost 3 marks. Marks were promised 'according to merit,' and the quotation you chose had much less description than many of those given.

Sophonisba. Yours were the unsigned answers for May.

The half-yearly prize is won by *Fourteen Streams* with a score of 360 out of 370. Her name and address are 'SISTER HENRIETTA, St. Michael's Home, Kimberley, South Africa, and Chelsea China feels sure that her

stay-at-home sisters will send her hearty congratulations on the success she has achieved, under what must often be difficult circumstances. Other good scores are *Melton Mowbray*, 358; *Double Dummy* and *Isabel*, 356; *E. V. B.* and *White Cat*, 355; *Athena*, 352; *Irnham*, 351; *Thorshaven*, 350.

---

#### SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER.

##### (Appreciations.)

Give the subject and author of the following :—

1. 'King that has reign'd six hundred years.  
I, wearing but the garland of a day,  
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.'
2. 'Was it thou—I think  
Surely it was!—that bard  
Unnamed who, Goethe said,  
Had every other gift, but wanted love?'
3. 'Poor, proud —, sad as grave  
And salt as life; forlornly brave,  
And quivering with the dart he drave.'
4. 'The quick Dreams,  
The passion-winged ministers of thought  
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams  
Of his young spirit he fed. . . .  
Wander no more from kindly brain to brain.'
5. 'A ploughman who in foul and fair  
Sings at his task,  
So clear we know not if it is  
The laverock's song we hear or his.'

6. Find another 'appreciation' suitable to stand with the above.

---

NOTICE.—Answers (to SEARCH QUESTIONS only) to be sent by the 25th of each month to *Miss Pridhan, Westmoreland Lodge, Wimbledon Park, Wimbledon*. 'Search Questions' to be written outside the envelope.

---

#### THIRD SHELF.

##### AT THE FOREIGN LIBRARY.

'Le roman d'un Enfant,' by Pierre Loti, published by Calman Lévy, Paris. This is the autobiography of a simple little prig, very poetically told. There is something piteous in the way in which the strong man of after days relates the tale of his own childhood; when his only playfellows were girls with perfectly correct manners and hair frizzed with irons. Still there is much to like in him, this little prig, who conscientiously carried out his mother's commands to put a muffler round his neck to guard against a chill in the ferry-boat, and bravely walked through the village with an 'en tout cas' up to shield him from the sun, although he admits that the jeers of the ferrymen and the village boys were so painful he thinks he never did a more difficult thing in his life.

The most beautiful parts of the book are the descriptions of French scenery; we may fancy ourselves wandering about in one of Corot's lovely landscapes.



It is not a book to read straight through at a time, as it is apt to grow wearisome, but a few chapters of an evening, when one is too tired for deep reading, is restful, and parts of the book carry one out to the hay-fields and the sounds and songs of spring.

To turn to Italy, so many people have mentioned to me of late Fogazzaro's book '*Malombra*,' that I think it worth while to say that I do not recommend it for young girls' reading. It is not a bad book; but very weird and uncanny, and the story is very painful. The fact that it is cleverly written and that the descriptions are vivid only enhances the above drawbacks.

'*Ho una casa mia*,' by Guidi, is a most excellent little work, though this may not be considered by every one suited to schoolroom girls, as it is intended for a mine of knowledge for young housekeepers. Any one, however, who is interested in the details of Italian middle-class life will find here plenty to amuse them.

The somewhat prosaic information is hung round a graceful little story, which at times becomes diverting, as, for instance, when on their return from their marriage trip, the young couple on the first evening in their new home send out both their servants on messages and go themselves to a place of amusement, forgetting the latch-key; they return to find their domestics awaiting them *outside* the door, and an entrance has to be effected by a ladder through the window. The poor little bride's mortification and the delight of the neighbours may be imagined.

The book is Roman Catholic and written with the intention to be generally improving, but it is not doctrinal.—LAURA F. WINTLE.

---

### CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—Seeing the good advice *re* foreign reading in this month's MONTHLY PACKET, will you allow me to say that I have found taking a magazine most helpful; the fact of its coming in regularly *makes* one read. If any reader of the MONTHLY PACKET would like to exchange a French magazine for the *Gartenlaube* (value 6d. monthly) I should be pleased to correspond with her on the subject.

Yours truly,  
EIN MÄDCHEN.

---

### BOOK NOTES.

*A Champion in the Seventies*, by Edith A. Barnett (Heinemann). We are among those who like 'novels with a purpose,' and are on the whole in sympathy with the purpose of this one; but yet it illustrates the weakness of such pictures, even when, as in this case, they are scrupulously impartial. It is an account, given almost in a biographical form, of Tabitha Vassie, a girl who left a very dull home, narrow in means and opportunities, to seek work in London, and of the opposition and misunderstanding of her family. Tabitha's action was perfectly justifiable, and her mother, Mrs. Vassie, is a portrait given with quite pathetic insight into her virtues and limitations. Given the family, the story is natural, Tabitha herself especially so. But, though such a home as Benscote was possible in the Seventies or the Fifties, or, for that matter, is so in the Nineties too, it is exceptional; the picture is too dark to be typical at any time. There are many mothers who keep all the house interests in their own hands, make futile occupations for their daughters, think reading a waste of time, and sacrifice the girls to the boys unduly. There are also some fathers as abominably selfish as Mr. Vassie. The grievances of the four girls are not exaggerated. But there is generally another side. We are told that these were religious people, indeed Sunday-school classes and poor neighbours

are mentioned. But that any sort of interest in life could be found in the village is never so much as hinted at. The social isolation, if they were really country folk, is very unusual. The Seventies were not the dark ages, and most girls paid plenty of visits and had friends to stay. Fancy-work is a poor object in life, but they *could* have worked for bazaars and presents. Such a girl as Mary would have had her hands full. It is not always dull to go and pick primroses or blackberries, and long before the date of the story there were essay societies, half-hour societies, and correspondence classes which might have lead to something besides fines. The very real grievances described would not have lost force if the girls had gone to an occasional picnic. The book is, however, very well worth reading, and Tabitha's London difficulties might be considered both by girls and their guardians. And if the earnest advocates of the cause of women expected their girl secretary to live on forty pounds a year, they certainly required education in their own principles.

*The Looms of Time*, by Mrs. Hugh Fraser (Isbister), is *not* a tale with a purpose. The picture of life in Chili is fresh and picturesque, the writing pretty, and the story amusing. But why, oh, why, must the charming heroine be so very silly and behave in a way so liable to be misinterpreted? A girl who pretended to be a married woman for the sake of more freedom on board ship, and then associated only with a young man and a little boy, would not really have been so 'nice' as Gilda, and has hardly stuff enough in her for the tragic episode with which the tale concludes.

*A Woman's Privilege* (A. D. Innes & Co.) is a pretty, not very probable, but quite unobjectionable story of stage life, with a well-carried out mystery, very high-minded heroes, and some romantic adventures to give it weight.

*Pratt Portraits*, by Anna Fuller (Putnam & Co.), is not a new book, but it has not come under our notice before, and is so charming that we must recommend it to our readers. The characters are intensely conscientious and good, but yet the interest of the little stories is drawn from the most simple, universal, and *human* motives. This we have often thought is the note of many of these New England stories, and it gives them great value.

*A Kentucky Cardinal*, by A. Sterner (James Allen), is also American, and very pretty. It is melancholy and fanciful; but might, we think, take some peoples' fancies very much.

## SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

### JAPAN—MODERN MISSIONS.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER.

33. Give an account of the actual founding of the Church Missionary Society in 1799, and of the principles on which it works.

34. An account of the entrance of the English and American Churches into Japan, and name the Church agencies now at work there.

35. Relate the progress of work in Japan, Missionary, Linguistic, and Synodical, within the past ten years.

36. What is the present outlook in Japan?

Books recommended:—for 33, *The Early History of the Church Missionary Society* (7s. 6d., C.M.S.), and several small books on the same subject at the office; *Classified Digest of S.P.G.*; *Under His Banner*, 'Japan' in Historical Sketches (1d., S.P.G. office).

Bog-oak would send a modern report or letters to any member who would return it with her papers.

Answers to be sent to Bog-oak, Industrial School, Andover, by Oct. 1st.

CLASS LIST FOR JUNE.

CLASS I.

lerne, Honeysuckle, M. P., 38 ; Klondyke, 37 ; Veritas, 34.

CLASS III.

Maiden Aunt, 12.

CLASS LIST FOR HALF-YEAR.

CLASS I.

Prize-winner, M. P. (236 marks out of 240). Prize announced next time.  
lerne, 213 ; Klondyke, 204 ; Veritas, 180.

CLASS II.

Honeysuckle, 162.

CLASS III.

Maiden Aunt, 116 ; Musidora, 65 ; Eumenes and Constans et Fidelis  
sent answers once only.

REMARKS.

21. Several papers do not bring out the massacre in Uganda of 1877, when Lieut. Shergold Smith, Mr. O'Neill, and their followers lost their lives. *Maiden Aunt*.—Uganda lies on the north-west of Victoria Nyanza, not between that and the east coast.

22. Excellent lives of Hannington by nearly all.

23. Some confusion has been made in using native prefixes. It is *safest* for the unlearned to use the same word for the country, language, &c. But to be very correct—

U denotes the country, *e.g.*, U—ganda.

Wa denotes the people, *e.g.*, Wa—ganda.

M denotes an individual, *e.g.*, M—ganda.

Ki denotes the language, *e.g.*, Ki—ganda.

24. The missionary's duty in the hour of peril was discussed after Central African troubles, and no decision came to. Practically, he must decide for himself at the moment. But none could blame a missionary without any flock as yet, who, persecuted in one city, should flee to another. And it may be his duty to fly with his flock to a safer place. If attacked by his own people, he must not save himself at their expense ; short of this he must judge whether to save himself. If attacked *with* his flock, surely he may defend himself and them, unless the flock were a tribe able to defend themselves. A missionary's peril in a tribal war, *if he takes no part*, is not great.

## 'MONTHLY PACKET' NOTICES.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The readers of the 'Monthly Packet' are invited to address **CHELSEA CHINA** on any subject the discussion of which occurs to them as likely to interest others, especially in connection with articles appearing in the **Magazine**.

## CHINA CUPBOARD PRIZES—

*Variety Specimens.* Prize, monthly, 5s.

*Search Questions (Who, When, and Where).* Prize, for six months taken together, £1 1s.

*Prose Competition.* Monthly Prize, 5s., or 10s., according to merit.

## RULES for the above—

(1) Papers must be sent by the 25th of each month, addressed to **CHELSEA CHINA**, care of Messrs. A. D. Innes & Co., Limited; they must NOT be addressed to 'the Editors.' (2) Each envelope must be marked *outside* with the subject to which it refers. Papers under separate competitions or discussions must be in separate envelopes. (3) The correspondent's name and address must be written on every paper: the use of a *nom de plume* for the lists is optional. (4) If competitors fail to comply with any rule, their papers will be disqualified. (5) The real name of the prize-winner is published in each case. (6) There are no entrance fees. (7) Prizes cannot be taken by the same person twice in a half-year.

## PROVERB COMPETITION, 1898.

It appears to us that a set subject fails to attract authors of experience, or to elicit their best work. We therefore cordially invite stories for next year's Christmas Number to be sent in without limit of subject, to be chosen according to merit and paid for in the usual manner. The **PROVERB COMPETITION** is limited to authors under 25.

All stories not to exceed 10,000 words, to be sent in between **JUNE 1st** and **JULY 1st, 1898**. Proverb stories to be headed **PROVERB COMPETITION, CHRISTMAS NUMBER**, outside the wrapper, other stories **CHRISTMAS NUMBER** only. Stamped cover or stamps to be enclosed for return.

Illustrate this quotation in a story—

'Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them.'

[The Editors of the 'Monthly Packet' will feel obliged if All Contributors will write their names and addresses clearly on their MSS., and will enclose stamps for return. Unless these conditions are complied with, the Editors cannot undertake to preserve, return, or enter into correspondence about MSS. Much trouble is saved if accompanying letters are enclosed in the parcel instead of being sent separately.

The utmost care is taken in returning MSS., but the Editors can only hold themselves absolutely responsible for such as are sent to them at their own request.]

# THE MONTHLY PACKET.

## NEW SERIES.

---

OCTOBER, 1898.

---

### *THE CONQUEST OF LONDON.*

BY DOROTHEA GERARD (MADAME LONGARD DE LONGGARDE),  
AUTHOR OF 'A FORGOTTEN SIN,' 'A SPOTLESS REPUTA-  
TION,' 'LADY BABY,' ETC.

---

#### CHAPTER I.

##### MAYBLOSSOM SOAP.

'WHAT is *your* skirt getting like?' asked Evelyn cautiously.

'Rather like a sponge,' was Philippa's prompt reply.

'And mine keeps reminding me more and more of boiled mushrooms. I wonder if we followed the directions all right?'

'I do believe it's going to be a failure?' sighed Adela, a little disconsolately.

'Nonsense!' came sharply in a fourth voice, even more juvenile than the others; 'you're always for giving in at once. Things generally come right in the end.'

'But will our hands ever come right?'

'Hands!' said the other contemptuously, as she plumped both of hers back into the basin.

The room in which the four sisters, with generously tucked-up sleeves, were at work over large vessels filled with what looked like coloured water, was of a comfortably square size, though rather low-ceilinged, and furnished in a more than primitive fashion. The word 'furnished' is, in fact, not quite applicable to the two or three ancient deal tables and the half-dozen haggard-looking chairs, banished probably from more presentable apartments, which, together with a

cupboard, whose better days had apparently been spent in a kitchen, and a carpet whose original colour would have been harder to guess than most conundrums, formed the appurtenances of the nondescript space. Besides the mysterious basins, there were many things in the room that would have puzzled an uninitiated visitor : pots, for instance, of various shapes, filled with various fluids and emitting various odours ; carving-tools also, and curious mixtures on chipped plates ; small heaps of fir-cones, bundles of moss, even ordinary hazel and blackthorn twigs littering one of the tables, and many other indescribable articles over which no duster had passed for long. An easel in one corner seemed to give to the room a dash of the artist's studio, but the place of the traditional skeleton was in this case filled by a wicker-work skirt-stand, of the sort affected by dressmakers. An ample fire blazed in the wide grate, and against the two low windows a sleety shower beat stormily. It was evident that this uninviting March afternoon had been considered a favourable opportunity for the operations upon the skirts, as well as the various feathers and laces which lay strewed upon the chairs awaiting their turn.

They looked terribly young, these four workers ; if the eldest of the quartette was twenty it was all she could possibly be. Looked at in a batch, they also gave the general impression of being all fair-haired and blue-eyed, but when examined in detail it was soon seen that there were grey eyes among the blue ones, and that each of these blondes was fair-haired in her own way and in a different degree. The four heads showed a complete scale of colour, and one which, curiously enough, seemed to be regulated by the precedence of age, for Philippa's golden-brown locks were almost more brown than golden, while the hair of the seventeen-year-old Adela was just a shade lighter than that of the eighteen-year-old Evelyn, till finally in the short-skirted but long-legged Cissy the colour had died away to a tint so pale as almost to make of her a "lint-white lassie" ; just as though the colouring matter required in the fabrication of these sunny locks had been gradually used up and ended by being almost exhausted.

'I told you it would come right in the end,' this young person was now saying triumphantly. 'My ribbons are coming right already ; at least, they're beginning to look like ribbons again, and not merely like drowned worms.' And she held up the dripping article to public admiration.

'What colour do you call that, exactly?' asked Philippa after a pause.

'Well, on the packet it calls it "terra cotta," but I should say it was more like——'

'Mottled dirt,' put in Evelyn.

'They will do for making Sunday bows for the dogs, at any rate,' decided Philippa, in the brisk tone of one accustomed to settle delicate questions. 'And if our skirts don't turn out good enough for church we can use them up as petticoats, you know, which means that in any case our afternoon is not wasted.'

'Mud petticoats, at the outside,' muttered Evelyn to herself.

'It certainly *did* say on the paper that canary and green made Eau de Nil when combined,' Adela presently remarked, eyeing her garment a little doubtfully. 'And Eau de Nil has been my dream ever since I read the description of that frock in the *Lady's Star*.'

'And did you think you would find your dream in that basin?' laughed Philippa. 'There's Spangles worrying my lace rosette, Cissy; box his ears, like a good child, please.'

With a nimbleness which spoke of frequent practice Cissy rescued the rosette from a half-grown puppy, stumbling over another dog in the process, and eliciting a sharp squall from a third quadruped whose paw she had inadvertently trodden on. There seemed to be an endless supply of dogs in the room, with both rough and smooth coats, both dry and muddy paws, and lying about in various ecstatic attitudes before the welcome blaze.

'Now *my* dream,' began Philippa, when quiet had been partially restored, 'would never be an "Eau de Nil" dress, it wouldn't be a dress at all. If a genie was to start out of the floor this moment to ask for my commands it is certainly not that I should order him to bring.

'What, then?' asked three voices in one breath.

'A riding-horse,' replied Philippa decidedly. 'Or if not that, then at the very least a pony-carriage—something that would make one a little more *movable*, help one to get about and see things and people, instead of sticking fast in one spot of the earth.'

'But you would need dresses even to go about in a pony-carriage,' observed Adela, 'and smart ones too, if you don't want to be laughed at by the people you go to see.'

'If the genie really were to come,' pensively remarked Cissy, 'I know what I should ask for in the very first place—chocolate creams.'

'That's because you're a baby. I'm not sure, by the by, that I wouldn't have a picture hat before I had an Eau de Nil dress.'

'You're both babies!' broke in Evelyn contemptuously. 'Who'd think of asking a genie for frocks or goodies? That's much too small a thing for his line of business. I would never let him off as cheap as that. He would have to give me a house and servants, and carriage horses, and theatre tickets, and invitations to balls, and, in fact, just *everything*. I would have the dresses and goodies, too, of course, but only as parts of the whole; nothing but the whole would content me.'

Her voice rose as she spoke and broke off with an abruptness which betrayed a certain excitement. A long silence followed the last words, perhaps every one present was dwelling on the visions conjured up by the tantalising speech.

Adela was the one who spoke first.

'I wonder if we shall ever go to a real ball?' she remarked, with a badly stifled sigh.

'Not unless a miracle happens,' said Evelyn grimly, 'or Uncle Lugdale takes a fit of generosity, which would be the greatest miracle of all.'

'Evelyn, you're in a temper,' remarked Philippa severely.

'I know I am!' burst out Evelyn, whose equanimity was being sorely tried by the behaviour of her skirt, and whose eyes were full of sky-blue drops, as well as of various damp and limply dangling locks. 'I always am in a temper when I think of that stingy old wretch leaving us to waste our sweetness on the desert air of Gilham, when a hundred pounds now and then would let us have such oceans of fun, and give Adela a chance of being seen, and save us all from withering away into old maids, without even knowing what it means to have a real good time. It's all very well making the best of it, and all that, but you know it's hateful to have to eat warmed-up dishes and wear turned frocks. You can't pretend that you wouldn't prefer to send your skirt to a first-class dyer's rather than dabble for an afternoon in a basin, or simply order a brand-new dress straight from London and make a present of the old skirt to Fanny,—now, can you, Phil?'

'It isn't a question of liking,' said Philippa, setting her small



teeth, as she vigorously wrung out the skirt just taken from the basin. 'It's just got to be done, and that's all, and grumbling doesn't mend matters. And, as for that, you know you can have my skirt if yours doesn't succeed. Can that be the cart already?'

Her last words had been mingled with the sound of wheels, just distinguishable from the sweep of the shower outside.

'The post!' cried Cissy, hastily wiping her hands on the first thing that came to hand, and which happened to be a silk necktie of Adela's. 'And it's the *Lady's Star* day! Oh, I do wonder if they have answered my question about the proper diet during distemper?'

'And there will be the account of the first Drawing-room,' put in Adela eagerly.

'And the patterns they promised for the imitation stained glass,' said Philippa.

When Cissy reappeared with the post-bag the opening of it was delayed by a small fight for its possession, but the "lintwhite lassie" had no idea of being balked of her prize.

'A letter for the "Captain,"—here, catch, Phil!' she observed, with one hand tossing over a large and rather serious-looking missive to her elder sister, while with the other she was already tearing open the pages of the beloved family journal. 'By the by, the "Newt" wants to know what she's to give us for supper.'

'Whatever she likes; Irish stew will do!—no, to be sure, Jabberwock stole the meat this morning. I suppose we shall have to do with scrambled eggs. But really, child, if you have done with your ribbons, you ought to be practising your piano instead of reading *Lady's Star*.'

'Just five minutes of it,' pleaded the 'child.' 'I'll play ever so much better if I know about the distemper.'

Philippa, engrossed with the strange and unfamiliar-looking missive in her hand, forgot to answer.

'A light and not over-nutritious system of nourishment is the only suitable one during the course of the malady,' Cissy was declaiming aloud, while Evelyn, having possessed herself of the opposite corner of the paper, was informing the company that her Majesty's first Drawing-room for this year had taken place with unusual brilliancy on the 2nd inst., and that among the toilettes that called for most attention were to be

counted those of the Countess of Mondillan, who had looked ravishing in——

But here a curiously sharp, short sound made them both turn their heads inquiringly. The dogs were lying in one big, peacefully hairy mound before the fire—that sound, therefore, had not come from them—indeed it had more resembled a gasp than either a yelp or a growl. Could it have been from Philippa? She was sitting stiffly in her chair, bolt upright, and with a white face which contrasted strangely with the orange-coloured fingers in which the open letter was visibly trembling. The Mayblossom Soap, it is true, on each packet distinctly disclaimed any sinister intentions with regard to the hands of the amateur dyers, and possibly after a liberal application of more commonplace soap this might yet turn out to be true, but so far the effect was decidedly more picturesque than conventional.

‘Merciful goodness! What is it, Captain?’ asked Cicely abruptly, forgetting all about the distemper diet. ‘You look awfully bad. Are you going to faint?’

‘What’s the matter with that letter?’ inquired Evelyn, eyeing her sister seriously. ‘Why are you looking at it as though it was going to bite? It can’t be any bad news, because we haven’t got——’

‘No, it isn’t bad news exactly,’ said Philippa, slowly turning her scared eyes upon her sisters. ‘It is—it is—well, I do believe it’s the genie!’

## CHAPTER II.

### THE HISTORY OF A REPUBLIC.

THE Vennings presented the somewhat rare spectacle of a family without a head, or at any rate what is generally accepted as such. Mr. Venning, one of those genial but unsuccessful artists who seem to possess the talent for everything except that of getting on, had married late in life, not having intended to marry at all, but being seized with pity at the forlorn situation of a young person whom a dying friend had recommended to his care. The friend had been an old college companion, and his daughter had remarkably blue eyes, and on the whole it seemed the simplest thing to the

generously uncalculating painter to give her his name, although during the ten years that his conjugal life lasted he remained in truth married more to his unattained ideals than to his actual companion. Whether he had done her much good by marrying her was an open question, for when at the end of those ten years overwork carried him off, she was left with four children, all girls, of whom the eldest had just passed her ninth birthday, and therefore had five people to provide for instead of one.

A little, grey, old, thick-walled cottage standing in a breezy upland pasture region, miles from everywhere—'ten miles from a leg of mutton,' as somebody had once defined it—and with only a small piece of high-hedged garden belonging to it, was all that the economies of a lifetime had brought to Mr. Venning. Here the widow now shut herself up, in order to devote herself exclusively to the education of her daughters, and to try and live on the few thousand pounds that still remained in the bank. She had begun life by being a governess, and now she became a governess again, but was not able to 'finish' more than the eldest of the four, and even this imperfectly, since she had broken down under the weight of anxiety and strain before Philippa was quite seventeen. The relations on both sides being scarce, and Fate not seeming to point out any one particular person whose duty it would be to assume the guardianship of the orphans, they had ended, to all intents and purposes, by doing without a guardian. One spinster cousin of their father's had indeed, soon after Mrs. Venning's demise, offered to live with her nieces, but at the end of only a fortnight's stay had fled back to her modest town lodging and her orderly habits, finding the atmosphere of Gilham Cottage too unconventional for her old-maidish tastes. Mrs. Venning had been of Irish extraction, and although there had been nothing Irish about her but her name, since she had taken completely after a gentle, fair-haired English mother, it seemed as though the strain of Celtic blood had burst out again with curious unanimity in her four children, not in looks so much as in temperament. The noisiness, want of method, and general unrest of the Gilham household, had, at any rate, been too much for Miss Amberley's nerves; upon which Philippa decided that since she was 'grown-up' there could be no earthly difficulty about taking charge both of herself and of her sisters—indeed, had

not her dying mother recommended them to her care?—a decision with which it did not happen to be any one's interest to interfere, and which accordingly was allowed to stand. Taking care of her sisters also implied completing their education ; but Philippa, nothing daunted, set about her task, and with the occasional assistance of the village school-mistress actually accomplished it in a sort of way, although not exactly in the one most generally received.

Yet, despite the large blanks in their knowledge, their distinctly unconventional manners and unnecessarily vigorous expressions, the Venning girls were in no danger of ever becoming 'second-rate,' perhaps because of having from babyhood imbibed the elements of good taste from their cultured father and their gently refined mother, or perhaps simply because of their isolation. If they talked slang, it was their own family slang—very much their own, uncontaminated by intercourse with the outer world, as innocent of any relationship to fashionable society *jargon* as to the cockney vocabulary. And if they gave names to everybody and everything, the habit sprang only from an innate sense of the humorous as well as of the picturesque, and from a certain impatient cast of mind which was common to them all, and pushed them to cram their meaning into concrete expressions, in order to 'get on quicker,' as Cissy put it.

It might be thought that life in this peculiarly forlorn spot, with no neighbourhood to speak of, and no money to make the enjoyment of such neighbourhood possible, even if it had existed, must have been almost as bad as penal servitude to four young creatures well supplied with the instincts of their age and of their sex. Thanks, however, to excellent health and an apparently inexhaustible fund of high spirits, existence was not only tolerable, but probably—and despite an occasional burst of rebellion on the part of Evelyn—not much duller than that of many votaries of fashion. Constant occupation of an extremely miscellaneous sort kept down discontent, just as the mutual friction of four by no means sleepy wits guarded against stagnation, the common bone of isolation. Grumbling, therefore, was a thing almost unknown in the republic, the one thing in fact which Philippa had no patience with. With this one exception the 'Captain' did not hold the reins of authority very tightly, although whenever it came to any serious decision, she generally managed to get

herself obeyed, just as it never occurred to any one to question her absolute right of disposal with regard to the hundred and twenty pounds which arrived in half-yearly instalments from the bank. It will therefore be seen that the republic was not without a rudimentary form of government, although, to say the truth, the representative of this government was not by any means the most methodical or prudent of the company, and did not necessarily direct it infallibly in the ways of wisdom. Despite her authoritative position it was perhaps Philippa who abandoned herself most entirely to the different forms of 'fun' known at Gilham, except at such times when a sudden sense of responsibility would descend upon her, urging her to review her ways. From these moments resulted violent fits of housewifely virtues, such as tidiness or economy, and which urged her to spend whole afternoons in putting cupboards into order, or mending linen, or even had been known to make her keep accounts, although this last-named practice had never been of long duration. At the end of a week of conscientious effort the entries had generally come to something like this :—

Salt	...	...	...	2½d.
Matches	...	...	...	6d.
Lost account of 10th.				

After which the financial system of the house was left to Fate for a while, as indeed were a good many other things in that house. Not that she ever forgot her mother's dying charge, but that she thought she was fulfilling it by always taking for herself the smallest portion of everything that was going, and by giving up her share of the most ordinary comforts. To sacrifice herself as far as was possible seemed much the simplest way of accomplishing her trust, and as yet she had not discovered that there might be a better one.

Philippa's leading spirit it generally also was who guided the others in what was designated in the family language as 'experiments,' and which consisted in almost everything from the concoction of new hat trimmings to the whitewashing of the lobby with their own hands. The whole range of house decoration was covered by these 'experiments,' for they had no idea of sitting down quietly to bare walls and middle-class furniture. Evelyn had inherited some of her father's talent,

just as they all in different degrees partook of his artistic tastes, and in their abundant leisure they had found ways and means of beautifying their small residence, in a rude and primitive way, it is true, and one that was the despair of the long-suffering Fanny, who was for ever sweeping up remains of moss and throwing away bunches of half-withered flowers, and then being scolded for having thrown them away, until she had arrived at not daring to touch even a rotten toadstool which she might chance to find on the drawing-room table, or a dead crow discovered in the corner of the miscellaneous workshop known as the 'studio,' for fear of its being one of the young ladies' most cherished models.

To make their drawing-room look 'like that of other people' was their ambition, yet despite the trouble they gave themselves to turn packing-cases into the regulation ottomans, without which they believed that no self-respecting drawing-room could exist, or to drape in the most fashionable style the stains in the wallpaper, with the remnants of their mother's only dinner dress, the room would not become conventional. It was all intended to deceive, of course, to throw dust in the eyes of the very few and far between visitors who ever found their way to Gilham, but it generally failed in its effect, and this principally because the secret was blurted out before the end of the visit. How was it possible to resist the temptation of telling the parson's daughter that the footstool she had her foot on was really an old hat-box covered with the lining of Evelyn's last winter jacket, or to inform the doctor's wife that the flower vases she had just been admiring so much were empty mustard pots decorated with gutta-percha medallions?

What with these 'experiments' and the long rambles on the downs to collect new treasures, and the drives in the indispensable donkey-cart, and what with the society of some half-dozen dogs of miscellaneous breeds but engaging characters, Gilham could not be said to be a depressing abode. But for all that youth will have its rights, and no amount of good-humour could quite stifle the yearnings that occasionally troubled the breast even of the resolute Philippa. The *Lady's Star* did much to keep these yearnings alive. It was the one piece of luxury they allowed themselves, their one channel of communication with a more fashionable world, the silken thread that connected them with their luckier fellow-sisters. The *Lady's Star* was the guide, philosopher, and friend of all

who lived within the walls of Gilham, the family oracle, not only on the fashion of the self-fabricated frocks, but of kitchen recipes, of gardening, as well as hygienic questions, and of many other things as well. It was here they had learnt the way of fabricating majolica vases out of putty and melted sealing-wax, and of utilising gilded copper-beans and varnished bobbins in the most highly decorative manner. According to the *Lady's Star* there was not so much as empty matchboxes or the stones of the cherries you ate which could not be pressed into the service of house decoration. In these columns it was, too, that the dazzled girls read of entertainments which made their hearts beat and their mouths water. Here they got by heart the names of all the leaders of fashion, and caught glimpses of such mysteries as 'hand-painted buttons' or 'picture hats.' And then, besides the delight of the questions and answers, there was the chance of making some advantageous exchange, for the *Lady's Star* had an exchange column just as it had everything else. It is true that as yet they had not been particularly successful in this latter department. Their first experience had turned upon a sealskin jacket that was offered for a 'well-bred collie puppy.' There were two collie puppies on the premises when this tempting offer appeared, and after a severe mental struggle it was decided to part with the handsomest of the two in order to provide Adela, who was always the one to feel the cold most, with the much-required winter garment. Tears rained plentifully on Jabberwock's rather rough coat, as Cicely with her own hands combed his locks for the journey, but the thought that he was going to a more luxurious home where there would probably be more bones a-going, as well as of the sensation that he must certainly cause there, helped to soften the parting. And he did cause a sensation, though not exactly of the sort expected. He began by eating up his address on the way, which somewhat delayed the identification, but no sooner had this taken place than he was back again at Gilham accompanied by an indignant note in which some extremely cutting remarks were made concerning his pedigree, and which caused him to be welcomed to his old home with a mixture of humiliation and relief.

Another time the description of an 'Iris' cooking machine on which you could apparently cook a dinner of four courses for six people within twenty minutes had proved too enticing

to be resisted, but by the time it had exploded twice, singeing off Fanny's (alias 'The Newt') eyelashes, and all but putting out her eyes, it was too late to reclaim the landscape of their father's which they had given in exchange, and nothing but a lengthy and sarcastic correspondence ensued. No, it could not be said that they had been exceptionally lucky so far, but hope, which springs eternal in the human breast, was particularly hard to kill at Gilham, and no one seriously doubted that some day the Exchange Column was going to bring them a grand catch.

Of course it was the family oracle who was likewise responsible for the Mayblossom Soap, which brings us back again to the stormy March afternoon on which the dyeing operations were taking place, and to the letter which the evening post had brought.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A COUNCIL OF WAR.

'THE genie?' said Evelyn, in answer to Philippa's mysterious exclamation. 'What do you mean exactly?'

Philippa, with flying breath and rising colour, was again going over the letter, while the others, oblivious of the *Lady's Star*, stood watching her, more in alarm than in hope.

'I mean that—let me see—yes, that Uncle Lugdale is dead, and that he has left us a thousand pounds.'

'I don't believe it!' said Evelyn quickly.

'Neither do I, quite; but it's written here quite plainly—a thousand pounds each—in order that——'

'Each?' came in a piercing shriek from Cissy, while Adela had to sit down suddenly, feeling that her legs were trembling under her.

'Yes, each.'

'But that makes four thousand pounds,' remarked Adela, in a low tone of awe.

'It seems to. I don't understand it at all. There is something said about giving us a chance of either finding a husband or going to the dogs—something in the wording of the will. Uncle Lugdale always *was* a little cracked, of course, and he certainly had money.'



'Then, perhaps, it's true, after all,' remarked Evelyn slowly, and the four pairs of bewildered eyes looked at each other with a dawning light in the very depth of their bewilderment.

'And if it is true, then that means we are quite rich,' said Cissy.

'My picture hat !' cried Adela, with a sudden, joyful recollection. 'Now I shall be able to have it !'

'And my chocolate creams ! Won't I just stuff with them !'

And Adela and Cissy fell speechless into each other's arms.

'Please try not to be an idiot, Cissy,' said Evelyn, who, on the whole, seemed to have kept the steadiest head. 'It's more important, surely, that we sha'n't be forced to make our own frocks any longer.'

'Nor to dye them either,' put in Philippa.

As she spoke, her eye fell on the damp lilac skirt that hung limply over a chair back. A flash passed over her face, and before she had quite realised what she meant to do, she had sprung to her feet, and seizing the woebegone-looking garment, had flung it full into the centre of the blazing fire. After which she sat down again, feeling considerably better.

A sharp hiss of coals, a cry from Cissy, a brief moment of stupefaction, and then—without a word of comprehension being necessary, and amid inarticulate cries of mingled triumph and delight, diversified by the spluttering of the fire and the barking of the startled dogs—the terra-cotta ribbons, the Eau de Nil skirt, and various other many-coloured articles followed in the wake of the first holocaust. As the flame gained the upper hand of the inimical moisture, the sisters sank down on to the nearest seats, laughing excitedly, and with dancing eyes.

Presently Evelyn felt able to speak.

'But what are we going to do, besides burning these rags ? When are we to have the money, and will it be paid to us at all ? Won't some horrid trustee keep it locked up till we're all of age ?'

'No, that's just it. Read the letter ; and there's a copy of the will too. Uncle Lugdale has stipulated that we're to have the entire disposal. He says it's at our age that one enjoys money most.'

'How nice of him !' said Cissy fervently. 'And how I wish I could feel a *little* bit sorry for his dying !'

'But what are we going to do?' urged Evelyn, some ten minutes later, when both letter and will had been read and commented on by everybody in turn. 'We ought to make plans. Of course we must have some big change. Shall we make a voyage, or give a garden party, or re-furnish the house, or live in another house, or what?'

'Time enough to decide that to-morrow,' said Philippa, putting on what Cissy called her 'responsible air.' 'It would be imprudent not to sleep over whatever resolves we may take. For to-night let us think only of duly celebrating the event. Child, you may tell the "Newt" to give us marmalade to supper, and to open a box of anchovies. By the by, I'm not sure that there's marmalade enough to go all round, but I don't a bit mind doing without. I suppose'—here the 'responsible air' began to give way to a very expressive gleam in the corners of the grey eyes—'that it would be disrespectful to Uncle Lugdale's memory if I were to play a waltz?'

In the end the waltz was omitted, but even without its help, and what with excited discussions and the liveliness of the dogs, who, infected by that of their betters, had abandoned themselves to a form of insanity known in the family language as 'spirits of madness,' what with the marmalade, the anchovies and the brilliant illumination of the rooms—Philippa had caused all the lamps in the house to be lit, for what was the use of economising petroleum when you had four thousand pounds waiting for you?—the evening closed in quite tumultuously enough, the only regret being that Cissy's suggestion about drinking Uncle Lugdale's health in the only bottle of claret at present on the premises, could not logically be adopted.

Next morning every one came down rather late, and looking much quieter than when they parted. Wild exhilaration had made way to strained expectation. Every one felt that as yesterday had been the day of rejoicings, so to-day must be the day of decisions. Instinctively all eyes turned towards Philippa, and the 'Captain's' face, as she sat at the head of the breakfast-table, made it clear that she had something to say. But it was apparently too weighty to be said here and now, for in answer to a question of Cissy's she merely shook her head and remarked, 'Afterwards,' in a tone that was almost solemn. Under the impression of that 'afterwards' breakfast was hurried through almost in silence, and when Philippa, rising from her untouched egg, said: 'I am going to speak to

the "Newt" about dinner, please wait for me in the drawing-room,' every one felt that the suspense could not have been borne much longer.

When ten minutes later Philippa, still with that impenetrable expression of face, entered the drawing-room, she found the audience grouped about the fireplace in a state of badly suppressed excitement. The place of honour—her father's old armchair, which had been re-stuffed with hay only a fortnight ago—had been reserved for her; Evelyn and Adela were perched side by side on the primitive ottoman, while Cissy crouched upon the hat-box footstool. From out of a frame cunningly composed of cones and acorns Mrs. Venning's picture, painted by her artist-husband, gazed, careworn and haggard, upon the group, as though the mother were yearning to put in her word to the conference preparing between these four unguided young things, whom she had left so reluctantly to the cold mercies of the world, but alas! the canvas lips could not move! A grateful group they made indeed for a mother's eye to rest upon, but alas! again, the canvas eyes could not see!

Yesterday's gale had blown away all the clouds, and a pale but steady sunshine illuminated the four fair heads now in such close proximity, and brought out both the likenesses and the differences in the four sets of features. In this illumination Philippa's light brown head looked almost golden; a small, compact, spirited head it was, remarkably well poised, with grey eyes that seemed accustomed to command, finely but darkly pencilled eyebrows, and a delicately aquiline nose. With her tall, somewhat too thin figure and well-marked gestures, she was perhaps more striking than really beautiful, yet undoubtedly she bore off the palm of good looks over Evelyn, who was generally accounted—by herself as well as others—as the plain one of the family, although in many other families her deep, golden hair and large, blue-grey eyes might possibly have made her the beauty. Her features were certainly somewhat heavier than those of her sisters, her nose somewhat blunter, her figure squarer; but, for all that her vivid colouring would have stood her in good stead anywhere else than just between Philippa and Adela. For, about Adela there could be no question that she was the beauty of the family. Not only had her pure golden hair hit off the exact right shade in the scale of colours presented by the sisters, not only had

she the most regular features of the four, the most exquisite complexion, the bluest eyes, the most perfect figure, but there was about her every movement an inherent, dreamy grace which none of them could equal, and which the almost savage seclusion in which she lived had fostered rather than suppressed. She was likewise accounted to be the delicate one of the family, although in many another family she might have stood for the robust one, just as Evelyn elsewhere might have had a chance of being considered good looking. The reputation of her delicacy rested chiefly on the fact of her having had whooping-cough as a child, and on her being the only one of the four apt to catch cold if she sat for *very* long in wet shoes and stockings.

About Cissy's looks there is not much to say as yet. It has already been remarked that her hair was almost 'lint-white,' but a pair of keen though pale blue eyes, and an impertinent little snub-nose quite robbed the face of the insipidity which the washed-out colouring might imply.

'The first thing,' said Philippa, looking round at her audience, 'is to be quite sure what we want.'

'To have a good time, of course,' remarked the 'child' promptly. 'That is what we want.'

'Yes, but there are different sorts of good times. Do we want to have a rather better time all our lives than we have been having till now, or do we want to have a *very* good time for only a few years?'

'But surely with four thousand pounds,' ventured Adela, 'we ought to be able to have a much better time all our lives, and not only a rather better one?'

'That's because you haven't calculated. I have got it all down here,' and she pulled a paper from her pocket. 'Four thousand pounds at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.—and that is what everybody says one usually gets—means just a hundred and forty pounds; together with what we have already got that makes two hundred and sixty. Of course we could live very comfortably on that, and have a better servant and lots of frocks, but the question is, who is to see them? Even if we buy a pony-carriage, where are we to drive to with it? Where is the ballroom in which we are to wear our ball dresses? One can't afford a London season on an income of two hundred and sixty pounds—I'm almost sure of that.'

This sounded so businesslike that she was looked at with a

little awe. Generally it was Evelyn who was the best at figures.

'Then must we always remain at Gilham?' asked Cissy in sudden depression. 'That would be *too* much agony!'

'I did not say that. It is true that we cannot afford a London season on two hundred and sixty pounds, but there is no reason why we should not afford it on four thousand.'

'What do you mean?' came the breathless question.

'You have thought of something, Phil?' said Evelyn, speaking for the first time, and looking at her elder sister keenly.

'Yes, I have. I have been thinking all night, and this seems to me the best way, but it is something that is only possible if we are all agreed.'

'Oh, do fire away!' exclaimed Cissy, quivering with impatience. 'Life is too short for so many explanations; we'll explode if you're not quick!'

'Well, it is this. If, instead of living on the interest of our four thousand pounds, we were boldly to attack the capital, we would not need to remain at Gilham. It would not last for many years, of course, but they are the best years of our life. Even in London I don't see how we could possibly spend more than a thousand a year, which means that we would have four years of constant enjoyment before us—four whole London seasons, during which it is almost impossible that one of us should not marry. We are none of us bad-looking, and none of us idiots, and we have one real beauty among us—you needn't blush, Ada, I am only stating a fact. Is it reasonable to suppose that, with fair opportunities, we shall remain old maids? And if only one of us marries decently, then it is all right, for of course she will look after the others. Indeed it seems to me that Uncle Lugdale must have had some such idea in his head when he made his will; why else should he have left it to us so unconditionally? And how can we be wrong in carrying out his intentions? That is my view of the case, and now I should like to hear yours.'

No one had moved during this speech, and apparently no one had breathed. Now Cissy, springing to her feet, clapped her hands sharply and sat down again in silence, though obviously choking with excitement.

Adela stirred uneasily. 'It is very tempting,' she said wist-

fully, 'but is it not a little imprudent? The two hundred and sixty pounds would last all our lives, you know, and that is a great deal of money too.'

'You never have any "go" in you,' muttered Cissy, while Evelyn said nothing, but sat quite still, staring straight in front of her with a curiously fixed gaze.

'But that certainly is not what Uncle Lugdale had in his mind,' objected Philippa. 'He speaks expressly of our finding husbands, so of course he meant us to have chances, and I must say I do think we owe some deference to his wishes. There are no chances at Gilham. If we sit on here for ten years longer there will be no ball given within reach.'

'If Swanmere was bought there might be a ball given there,' suggested Adela. Swanmere was the one big house of the neighbourhood, so big that it had ruined its former possessors, and for a dozen years past had frightened off every new candidate. 'Miss Grey said the other day that there was a new buyer in the wind.'

'There always is a new buyer in the wind, and yet it is never bought. It was so before we came here, and probably it will go on being so after we are dead. It's not on Swanmere you must count for wearing your Eau de Nil dress.'

'But supposing none of us marry?'

'Then we shall be exactly as well off as we were at this time yesterday. The thing really isn't a bit imprudent when you look at it closely. We shall always, in any case, have our present income to fall back upon, since we can't touch that, and in the meantime we will have had a real good time, and have enough things to talk about to last us the rest of our lives. Ah, I have thought of all that,' and she looked round her triumphantly. 'What do *you* say, Evelyn?'

'I say you are right,' said Evelyn, raising a pair of brilliantly shining eyes to her sister's face. 'It's a lottery perhaps, but I'm quite ready to stake my share in it. There are ever so many chances in our favour. I've just been making a sum; we are four of us, and we shall have four seasons; counting each of us and each season as a matrimonial chance; that makes sixteen matrimonial chances. I quite agree to everything, except the coming back to the hundred and twenty pounds, and all these shams'—she looked round almost contemptuously at the contrivances they had all been so proud of, beholding them with different eyes already. Rather than that I would propose to a

man myself—one with money, of course. I always told you that I meant to take the first good offer that came my way.'

'Oh, Evelyn !' cried Adela aghast.

'Do you mean to say that you take her seriously ?' calmly remarked Philippa.

'Just let us get to London quickly, and you'll soon see whether I'm serious.'

'We can't get to London unless every one is agreed, and Ada has not decided yet. Have you reflected, Ada ?'

'As if with *her* looks one required to reflect !' burst out Evelyn. 'Put me in her skin and I'd have a duke in a week. She's only got to look in the glass and imagine that her brown winsey is Eau de Nil satin, with a bunch of water-lilies on the shoulder, and the long grass all trailing over her arm'—Evelyn half shut her eyes after the fashion of an artist who is composing a picture—'and one single lily shining in her hair, and all the people that are mentioned in the *Lady's Star* looking on ; and then let her pretend that she wants to remain at Gilham !'

On Adela's sensitive face the delicate colour was spreading as the vision of herself rose before her ; a radiant light chased the cloud of doubt from the blue eyes.

'I don't want to remain at Gilham,' she murmured in a mixture of confusion and pleased anticipation.

'Then there only remains the "Child,"' said Philippa, 'and I suppose I needn't ask *her*. Oh, girls, Uncle Lugdale couldn't have chosen a better time of the year to die in ; town is not even full yet. Have you realised that we are still in time to make our entry this very season ? Wasn't it just sweet of him to stipulate that we should not wear mourning for him ? Not that we should have done so in any case, but still it was nice.'

The gravity was quite gone from Philippa's face by this time, her eyes were beginning to dance in spite of herself.

'This season !'

There was another exchange of almost startled glances. The nearness of so much delight seemed almost terrible. Cissy alone seemed, in her turn, to have fallen into a fit of abstraction.

'Why do you suppose that you need not ask me ?' she enquired with unexpected seriousness.

'Surely you don't mean to say that you're not agreed ?'

'I am agreed, but under one condition.'

'Speak out, child!'

'That I, too, shall go to balls.'

'Of course you shall—in time.'

'No, not in time—this very season. Look here, Captain, I've got to be counted with too. I'm not going to sit at home like a baby, while you're dancing and having no end of fun.'

'But, Cissy,' exclaimed Philippa in distress. 'That is impossible! You're not even sixteen, you would look absurd in a ball dress. Next season, perhaps, and even this year there will be lots of fun for you without going to balls—the theatres and the Zoo, and walks in the Park.' Whereupon Evelyn and Ada, chiming in, proceeded to enumerate all the delights that a sojourn in the capital affords to adolescents, but without producing any effect on Cissy's stiff-necked resolution. Untempted by any of the bribes offered, she stood manfully to her guns, squarely declaring that unless she were taken at full grown-up value she would not put her thousand pounds into the venture. For just a few minutes Philippa felt a little staggered. She had never heard of the possibility of going to a real ball at fifteen and a half, such a proceeding seemed to be against all the rules of society, either as she knew them by tradition or as taught by the *Lady's Star*. But the leader of the republic was not one to shrink from bold measures. Cissy's withdrawal from the plan would complicate matters in many ways. The 'Child' was tall for her age, clothes can do a great deal, and, after all, no one would be likely to look up her baptismal register—these and other reflections led to the decision that in consideration of her riches the question of her years would be waived.

'Without that Evelyn's sum about the sixteen chances would have come all wrong,' grinned Cissy. And Evelyn humbly admitted her error.

From that moment there remained only the details to fix.

'The first thing we need is a chaperon,' said Philippa, with a captain's eagle eye for the exigences of the situation. In spite of her independent position she was so little of a revolted daughter that the possibility of dispensing with an appendage which according to some people will soon be as obsolete as a dodo's egg did not even occur to her. The ideas of propriety of these scatterbrained young things were, if anything, rather of the old-fashioned and rigid sort.



'Let's advertise for one in the *Lady's Star*,' suggested Evelyn. "'Wanted, a respectable elderly lady with good references, and——'"

'The only person I can think of is "Whiskers."'

'She won't come,' objected Adela. 'She had quite enough of us last time.'

'Whiskers' was the name they had given the spinster aunt who had once made a short and troubled stay at Gilham. She owed her appellation not to any suspicion of hairyness on either lip or cheek, but because the girls had detected in her a likeness to a certain personage of 'Alice in Wonderland'—they were great in detecting likenesses—whose distracted appeal to his ears and whiskers 'had caught' the family's fancy.

'We'll talk her over,' said Philippa confidently. 'We'll first just invite her on a visit, without saying a word of our idea, and once we've got her here we'll bamboozle her into it. She'll want a little training, too, I fancy, and a good deal of dressing up; but we'll manage that. I'll write to her at once. And there will be other letters to write too. Of course we'll have most of our frocks to buy in London, but we must have something proper to arrive in. I vote for Greenfern. I had better write for patterns to-day.'

She said it as carelessly as she could, but the sisters almost blushed with the pure excitement of the thought. Nothing seemed to bring the reality of their changed fortunes so near to them as the fact that they were actually in a position to order travelling dresses from the great, the almighty Greenfern, who hitherto had been to them but a bright, particular star, to be worshipped 'at a distance.

When a quarter of an hour later the council dispersed Philippa had entirely succeeded in persuading herself, as well as her sisters, that their decision not only was not foolish, but even that it would have been almost wrong to leave the so obvious intention of the testator unfulfilled.

(To be continued.)

## MIDSUMMER-DAY IN SWEDEN.

---

THE merriest of all Swedish *folkfestar*, and, next to Jul, the most important is Midsummer, or John the Baptist's Day. Far back in the dark ages this festival was sacred to Balder, the god of light, in whose honour huge bonfires were lighted upon every hill and knoll throughout the country. It was a great sacrificial feast, and altars ran red with the blood of human victims, whose shrieks and dying groans were drowned by the blare of trumpets and the shouts of a deluded people.

These savage rites are strangely brought to mind by the customs and superstitions which still linger around this relic of bygone idolatry. Transplanted, like other national feasts, into the Church of Christ, Balder's grand festival does not even bear its ancient name; yet, more than any other, it retains the usages which characterised it in its days of heathen splendour.

In rural districts great preparations are made for Midsommardagen; and as usual festivities begin the evening before. All preliminaries, therefore, must be completed in the morning, and as these are by no means few, farmers and their wives and daughters are astir at an early hour. By three o'clock in the morning the house-father and his sons are at work in the forest. Their first care is to cut down a straight young spruce-pine about thirty feet high, from which they strip off every bough and twig. This is for the Maypole which by and by will be reared in the farmyard. Then he cuts a liberal supply of sturdy green boughs from what in Sweden are called 'leaf trees,' in contradistinction to the evergreen firs and pines—birch, maple, mountain-ash, and oak, elm, willow, beech, and ash, in districts where these latter are found. He has brought with him more than one large *kärria* (or cart); for porches, doors, windows, and gateposts must be decked with greenery, of which, too, the Maypole dressers will require a liberal supply; and last, but not least, the Midsummer-Leaf Bower

must be made. Is it possible for one cart to carry enough for all these pressing needs ?

The custom of making an arbour of green boughs on this day is very ancient. How it originated we know not. Possibly, like the Maypole, it bore some symbolic reference to the sun-god, or god of light, and formed part of the ritual of his worship. These rustic bowers are formed entirely of birch boughs skilfully intertwined, and very pretty they are. Every farmer and every cottager rears one in his garden or yard, and the custom is not neglected even in towns where boughs cannot be had for the trouble of cutting.

A busy man is the farmer on Midsommarafton, yet his preparations are trifling compared with those which fall to the lot of his wife and daughters. At an early hour of the morning, when the lads are chopping down trees and lopping off boughs, their sisters are hard at work in the dewy fields picking flowers in eager haste. Fortunately, no time is lost in searching, for at this season they grow in rich luxuriance ; yet so many are required that the task, at best, is by no means a light one. First, great bunches of meadowsweet are gathered and sent home by one of the children, because mother is waiting for them.

All the year round the Swedish housewife strews her kitchen floors with sprigs of juniper ; it does occasionally happen that this is not obtainable, and then she substitutes twigs of pine or spruce-fir. But she does this unwillingly, for to a Swede pine twigs have the most melancholy significance. The entry, passages, steps, and the street, yard, or road in front of a house from which a funeral is about to take place are always thickly strewn with pine, even in Stockholm itself ; and so strong is the force of such constant sorrowful associations, that only when no juniper is to be had will a few pine twigs be strewn about the floors.

On Midsommardagen, however, birch twigs or sprays of meadowsweet take the place of the universal juniper sprigs. But the change can hardly be said to be for the better. The pungent odour of the juniper is refreshing and wholesome, whereas the sickly scent of meadowsweet is extremely oppressive and apt to produce headache. No matter ; it is the custom, and no one dares rebel. No one wishes to rebel, either ; Swedes are passionately fond of flowers, and can by no possibility have too much of such a good thing.

When the village maidens come home, laden with sweet spoil, the labour of decoration begins—no light task, pleasant though it be, for not only must the house be adorned with bunches of flowers and green leaves, but wreaths and long garlands are needed for the Maypole, also posies tied ready for the horses' heads next morning. Moreover, the waggon which is to take the family to church must be over-arched with boughs and decked with bright nosegays. If, as often happens, the church lies across the water, these favours are bestowed on the boat instead of the waggon.

On Midsommarafon all flowers are welcome ; but the favourite—in fact, the flower of the day—is the corncockle or blue-bottle, which used formerly to be seen everywhere, either as a personal or domestic decoration.

‘No summer sky hath a more delicate hue  
Than thy blossoms that ope ‘mid the ripening corn.’

So sings the poet ; but the ripening corn is none the better for the pretty blue flower which springs up uninvited in its midst. ‘Handsome is as handsome does,’ and quaint old Gerarde thinks so seriously of its evil deeds that he has not a word to say for its beauty. ‘What hurte it doth amonge corn !’ he cries. ‘The spoyle unto bread, as well in colour, taste, and unwholesomeness, is better knowne than desired.’

In former days the Swedish farmer was either unaware of its bad character, or else he philosophically determined to shut his eyes. Instead of grumbling about the ‘spoyle unto bread,’ he fairly delighted in the mischievous flower which

‘Looks through its fringes to the sky,  
Blue—blue ; as if that sky let fall  
A flower from its cerulean wall.’

Of late years, however, the corncockle has been by no means so universally plentiful as it used to be, although in some districts, about the month of August, it still appears in the corn-fields—almost always in company with the bright yellow marguerite that is found so much in Sweden. Blue and yellow are the Swedish national colours, and when one walks through such a cornfield in autumn one can almost fancy that the very flowers are swaying to the words, ‘*Flaggau upp !*’

Possibly, in olden days, the corncockle was dedicated to

Balder, on account of its medicinal virtues. It is, at any rate, a coincidence that the juice of this plant was used to cure Chiron the centaur, who, like Balder, had been sorely wounded by an arrow. It is to this legend that the flower owes its Latin name, *Centaurea cyaneus*.

Still more characteristic of the day is the Maypole, which is to be seen in every village and farmyard throughout Sweden, and which is also fully as popular in the towns. This is one of the many Scandinavian customs which, centuries ago, found its way to our country—possibly brought over by some viking and his crew. The English of that day adopted the Maypole; but apparently, on account of its name, they thought it more appropriate to May-Day than to Midsummer. But as the Maypole proper bears many symbolic references to sun-worship, the Swedes are fully justified in giving it a prominent place in the festival once sacred to the God of Light. But, however much pros and cons of this kind may perplex learned folk, the people chiefly concerned care not a whit. Rightly or wrongly, the Maypole, like the birchen bower and the blue-bottle, has always formed part of the Midsummer feast; and that which was, that is, and will be, while a Swede remains to keep alive national traditions.

The young people of a village share the duty and pleasure of preparing the Maypole—the lads providing the tree and the greenery, while the girls gather flowers and twine the garlands and wreaths for its decorations. When properly dressed with green leaves and bright flowers the Maypole looks very handsome; but this is not all which custom requires. Hoops, wheels, triangles, and darts—all well-known emblems of the sun—must be suspended from different parts of the pole, and to these are attached bits of red cloth, gay ribbons, and coloured paper. Gilded egg-shells also dangle here and there among other bits of finery; and to crown all, a weather-cock, bravely spangled with silver and gilt paper, is firmly fixed to the summit. Sometimes a flag takes the place of the vane—a flag which bears in big letters the name of the village or farm to which it belongs, when it is not the dearly-loved ‘blue-yellow’ national standard.

It seems strange that a pole which is reared in *June* should be called a *May*-pole! But the explanation of this is found in the fact—not generally known even in Sweden—that the Swedish word *Maj* has another very ancient meaning, which

signifies 'green leaf.' The Maypole is thus, literally speaking, what it is in reality—a pole with green leaves, and it thus stands as the impersonation of the 'festival of the green leaves.'

The raising of the Maypole is performed with some ceremony ; guns are fired, drums beat, fiddlers play, and the girls sing in chorus, while the lads firmly fit the pole into its place—a most vital necessity, when one remembers that its height is often fifty or sixty, and sometimes even a hundred feet. Formerly it was left standing all the year round, and regarded with superstitious veneration, bearing a part in every festival, and in public and domestic ceremonies, such as a wedding or a christening ; but this is not the case now.

The Maypole is not the only part of Balder's ancient festival which has come down through the centuries unchanged. More than a thousand years have elapsed since the last worshippers of the sun-god died ; yet the fires which, in some parts of the country are kindled upon the hills, bluffs, and mountain-sides, are still called 'Balder's Beacons,' though, doubtless, few of the peasants who use the name understand its origin. Thus strangely has custom preserved the trappings of the old-world faith, centuries and centuries after that faith has ceased to be even a memory.

When the sun sets the people light *lusteldar* on the hilltops, which are often so numerous that the whole country-side seems illuminated. Each village has its bonfire, and often more than one, for every farmer will have his own ; and, as on May-Day, he takes a pride in building a fire which shall surpass those of his friends and neighbours.

Each Maypole and Balder's beacon forms a centre of rustic merrymaking ; the whole livelong night the young folks dance and sing around them, while the fiddler plays at the top of his speed, and guns are fired to give point to the melody. The dancing, indeed, is not left altogether to the young people. On Midsommarafton everybody dances, old and young ; and one may see a large circle, three deep, dancing around a Maypole—children, fathers and mothers, and grandparents—hand in hand, and all enjoying the fun.

In some parts of Sweden it is a common thing for young men and boys to jump through the flames of their Midsummer bonfires—a foolish act of bravado which is undoubtedly a survival of some heathen rite similar to that enacted of old

at the feasts of Baal and Moloch ; what was once an act of worship is now done in sport.

It is in the country that all Swedish festivals are seen in perfection. Many of them are ignored altogether in towns, but Midsummer is not of this number, and citizens are not a whit behind their country cousins in keeping up the time-honoured old customs.

On Midsummer-Eve the 'leaf market' in Stockholm is a sight to be remembered. There you will find ready for sale stacks of green boughs, chiefly birch, which is the universal chief factor in the decoration of houses and yards, and in the erection of leaf arbours. The air, too, is heavy with the scent of flowers, which lie heaped high upon stalls and trestles—flowers in bunches big and little, in garlands long and short, in wreaths of every size and every hue. Maypoles are there for those who love the old custom—and who does not love it? Evidently the vendors have no doubt about it, for the number and variety of their Maypoles is surprising. There are thousands, from the great, bare fir-tree, thirty, fifty, or sixty feet high, to the child's toy pole six inches long, and covered with red and blue paper—stacks, bundles, drayloads of bare poles, yet not too many, as you will find out presently if you care to walk through the town this busy day. Yet even this good old custom, general as it is, is not so universal as it was formerly, when there was not the exodus from Stockholm to the country that now takes place at the earliest possible date in the summer, of every one who is not absolutely compelled to live in town through the months of June, July, and August.

Every house seems to be decorated. Public and private buildings, shops, and factories, all in some way or other are adorned with greenery and flowers, and no little taste is displayed by the householders, who evidently vie with each other in the style and beauty of their devices. Designs differ according to taste ; but in one particular all are alike, for every door is surmounted by an archway of green ; formerly it was very usual to hang a bunch or wreath of blue-bottle above the door, and this is still often the case in the country amongst the *bönder*, but otherwise, as we have before stated, the corncockle has disappeared to a considerable extent.

On Midsummer-Eve everything in and about Stockholm bears a festive character. The ships, boats, and steamers in the different harbours are one and all decked with green

boughs, as are the countless steam-launches that ply to and fro across the numerous watery highways. Even the horses' heads are adorned with bunches of birch-leaves.

After all, though, Midsummer-Eve in town is very different from Midsummer-Eve in the country. Merchants and shopkeepers may, and do, hang up their wreaths and rear their leaf arbours; it is even possible, perhaps, in the suburbs, to enjoy a dance around the Maypole, but they can light no Balder's beacons, for the risk of fire forbids. To see this festival in its glory you must needs visit some country village, the more remote the better. Then you will see the people dancing and singing round their bonfires and Maypoles, while the fiddler plays, drums beat, guns are fired, and the farmer who owns a small cannon is looked up to as a credit to his country.

The next morning there is a large attendance at church. It is a pretty sight to see the congregation assembling from all parts, some on horseback, some in *kärror* (or carts), and some in waggons overarched with boughs and drawn by flower-decked horses. If the church happens to be on the bank of a river or the shore of a lake, the scene is still more striking. Boats may then be seen here and there upon the blue waters coming from different villages and farms along the shore, and all making for one landing-place; and every boat is lavishly adorned with boughs of birch, maple, or mountain-ash, in the same way that we have already seen on board every craft in Stockholm in honour of the day.

The Swedish peasant, economical and utilitarian as he is, is also fond of what is beautiful. On festival days he thinks it no trouble to deck his boat with green leaves and flowers; and he does it because he likes to see everything about him look *skön* (beautiful). He should be content to-day, at least, for his passengers are dressed in their best, and the gay bodices and aprons of the women contrast charmingly with his simple decorations.

In many districts the people have more or less laid aside their picturesque and becoming national costumes; but in others old customs still prevail—especially in Dalarne, where the peasantry cling so much to the traditions of their ancestors that it is considered almost a crime to give up the *daldräkt*; every parish has its own particular costume, in which no change is ever made.

On Midsummer-Day the churches in the country are prettily



decorated with green boughs and flowers, and the high pulpit is often converted, for the time, into a perfect bower of green, with branches of lilac and other flowering shrubs; the pews and the altar being embellished in a similar manner. The congregation adds to the effect, for many of the young girls carry posies, and the men, especially the young ones, have generally a nosegay in their button-holes.

Midsummer-Day is considered a lucky day for betrothals. Formerly it was the custom for young men to exchange bouquets with their sweethearts when they met after service in the churchyard, and that little ceremony ratified the engagement; but of late years this picturesque custom has fallen into disuse.

After service the Holy Communion is administered to as many as have, the obligatory number of days beforehand, signified their intention of partaking of it. Pleasure-loving the Swedish peasant is, but never forgetful of his religious obligations. Yet this piety, sincere though it be, does not prevent superstition, which, if it means anything, implies a certain amount of belief in spirits and fairies; relics, in fact, of the heathen worship discarded ages ago.

Amongst these ancient superstitions we may mention the *grast*, which is met with in Norrland, where the peasants on the evening of Midsummer-Day make huge bouquets of every possible sort of flower and grass, which are called *midsommars-graster*. These they hang up in all the different farm-buildings, especially in the stable and dairy, so that the animals may not be bewitched. The St. John's-wort must on no account be omitted, for it has a peculiar and unconquerable power of delivering animals from all kinds of diseases.

These midsummer nosegays are to be met with in many provinces, but almost everywhere some variations in their composition or virtues are to be met with. Silent and alone during the still hours of the warm, bright, midsummer night, the girls wander over fields and meadows, and even if they meet any one they must not reply to a question that may be put to them.

In Dalecarlia the girl must gather flowers of three different kinds, three blossoms of each sort. She must only express herself by signs, not saying a word either when she goes out or comes in. In Dalsland the maiden must pluck no less than nine different kinds of flowers, which she must gather from

nine different farms belonging to as many different proprietors. She must be alone and maintain an unbroken silence all the night, and until she rises next morning. In some places the flowers are made into a wreath, and in others a bouquet, which is usually called a *blomstergrast*; this the damsel puts under her pillow when she goes to sleep, and if she has conscientiously fulfilled all these conditions her future husband will appear to her in a dream.

Another curious superstition has to do with woodcraft. On Midsummer-Eve, when the farmer has cut down his Maypole, and the many green boughs needed for decorations, he leaves his axe hanging upon a branch in the forest instead of carrying it home as usual. This is a delicate attention to the Demon of the Woods, a mark of deference such as is due to a superior. The demon is lord of the forest, and it is considered the proper thing to permit him, if he wishes, to inaugurate the new year, which commences with the shortest night.

In the more northern provinces the sun only disappears for about an hour, and within the Arctic Circle only for a few minutes; and even in these enlightened days there are not wanting those who imagine that, during this short interval, they can hear the Wood Demon felling trees in the forest depths. Happily, the demon is honest enough to return the axe, and the worthy farmer takes it home next day with the comfortable assurance that throughout the year it will do good work.

---

*THE GOSPEL WRIT IN STEEL.*

BY ARTHUR PATERSON, AUTHOR OF 'FATHER AND SON,'  
'FOR FREEDOM'S SAKE,' ETC.

---

## CHAPTER XXIX.

THE journey from Washington to Chippewa is tiresome enough even at the present day, and in 1864 was still less comfortable; but to Seth, after all his hardships and bitter sufferings, it was a pure luxury. He had picked up in strength very quickly, and was now quite able to enjoy life as long as he did not exert himself. The lazy existence on the railroad suited him exactly. In Washington the excitement and bustle had been very trying, and though he enjoyed it in a way, yet when John, in a final burst of impatience had said that the fuss 'made him more tired than if he had been in the saddle twenty-four hours,' Seth, though he laughed, felt disposed to agree with him.

Seth held no illusions concerning himself. He was inclined rather to underrate his own powers, and was John's most outspoken admirer. But the everlasting hymn of praise poured forth in honour of his old rival became a trifle wearisome after a time, and aroused a desire for some, if ever so little, public recognition of his own services and sufferings. The interview with Lincoln was a climax. The meaning of 'the little story' was obvious enough, and Seth spent a very uncomfortable half-hour thinking it over. Then he threw the thought aside—the analogy was false. Jean belonged to him because she loved him. He could not, if he wished, give her to John. Until she repented of her choice and told him so, the President might go hang! As they journeyed northwards the longing for Jean became overpowering, and his heart swelled with the pride of possession. Let John receive all the praise and glory that was his due, and even the over-praise that sentimental

people poured upon his head. He, Seth, had something better than all this waiting him at his journey's end, something that John would have given his fame ten times over to possess. 'In story-books—goody story-books'—Seth comfortably reflected as he smoked a fragrant havannah which John had given him, 'old John would return to find the lady of his love so dazzled by the greatness of his achievements that I, in common decency, would have to bundle myself away at the shortest possible notice back to the war, or get killed out of hand. In real life these things come out differently. Nevertheless, confound the President! His little story will leave a nasty taste in my mouth to my dying day. Poor old John.'

The night that John and Seth returned to Chippewa will not soon be forgotten by the good folk there. Since the day the local paper had doubled its circulation by reprinting paragraphs from the great organs of the East about 'the Winsconsin patriot,' every soul in the place, from the minister to the youngest of Seth's old scholars, determined that a reception worthy of the occasion should be accorded to John. There was to be a band, a torchlight procession, and a grand supper at the Store. The railway depôt was hung with flags and Chinese lanterns, which were to be lit with the torches when the train was signalled in. Every one was there, and cheered heartily when Mrs. Burletson, in the very best of all her dresses, leaning on the arm of Luke Selby, chairman of the festivities, walked to the place of honour in the centre of the platform. With her was Jean, still in mourning for her mother, but with fresh flowers in her hat and dress. Many a nod and smile passed from neighbour to neighbour.

'What a daisy she be!' the town-sheriff whispered to his friend the saloon-keeper, 'and what a pity she waits for Seth! She took the wrong one, Job, my boy—that I will always say—when she had him and mittened John.'

The whistle of the approaching train now, and every one drew breath for a cheer. Mrs. Burletson stood up and took Jean's hand. The engine light travelled along the platform, but the rattle of the cars, the scrunch of the brakes, were quickly drowned by the yell of men and boys as they recognised John in his captain's uniform, standing on the platform of the car waving his hat to his mother. Seth was beside him, and forgot to feel this time that he was left in the cold, for there was Jean's face eager and beautiful, the face that belonged

to him. There was little time though for private greetings. A hurried word and hand-pressure, and then they passed from the cars between the lines of cheering townsfolk and the music of the band.

John came first, his mother on his arm, the proudest mother in the North that day, Seth following with Jean, who was a trifle pale, somebody remarked, and was looking tired. At the entrance to the depôt a carriage was waiting, into which Luke handed Mrs. Burlington and Jean, John and Seth following. Then six young men drew out the horses, amid ecstatic shouts from the crowd, and placed themselves in the shafts; the torch-bearers ranged alongside, the band took up position in front and struck up 'Marching through Georgia' with might and main, and away they went in full procession down the main streets of the town. As they approached the Store, the tune was changed to 'Tramp, tramp, tramp,' and here the enthusiasm of the people broke all bounds, and when John, having mounted the platform, turned to face his friends and make the speech he felt was inevitable, one thousand throats roared out the refrain of the last verse of the Union prisoners' song—

'On, on, on the boys came marching  
Like a grand majestic sea,  
And they dashed away the guards,  
From the heavy iron bars,  
And we stand once more beneath our banner—free!'

After this they cheered again until no one had any breath or voice left. Then John spoke.

'I thank you, friends, for your splendid welcome. Seth has asked me to do the speaking for us both, and though he would do it twice as well as me, I am glad to address you. First, I want to say this: the papers have printed a great deal of stuff about me. Don't you believe a word of it. I am almost ashamed to show my face after what I've read. There is only one hero in this thing, and they scarce mention him. But I will name him to you—this man who stands by me.'

As he turned to Seth, and the crowd hoarsely cheered, his eye met Jean's.

'Aye, boys,' he cried, becoming eloquent for the first time in his life, 'cheer him all you know. He deserves it, and more. He fought three long years for his country; he was badly

wounded once, and has endured hardships right along. Then for six months he lay in Santanella prison. What he suffered you will never know, and I, though I saw something, do not realise it all. It was a martyrdom of pain and misery. But God has been merciful to him and his, and he has returned in safety. On his behalf as well as on my own I thank you for your greeting.'

When the speeches were done there came the supper in the Store. It was long after midnight when John and Seth reached their beds. The next morning John rose betimes and drove his mother home. He was dressed in his workaday blue jean pants and rough brown coat; and though his friends tried to call him 'Captain' the effort soon became too great; they dropped into old habits of speech, and came back to plain John Burtleston at last.

Seth left his room later; he had been much exhausted by the excitement the night before. John had departed. Luke was in the Store, and Jean was in the kitchen with her sleeves turned up, busy with household work.

'This is a change,' he exclaimed, as he noticed the plainness of her dress, and a tinge of redness in the hands and wrists that used to be so white, not to mention a big coarse apron which in old days Jean had said was a thing she would never wear.

'I hope so,' she said, with half a smile and half a sigh, for Seth's presence brought back many sad memories. 'A more useless creature than me when you went away did not exist I suppose. But mother's illness changed all that. I *had* to work. Now sit down at that table while I get your breakfast ready. Poor dear, you look very tired still. You must take things easy to-day and for many days.'

Seth did as he was told, and as he watched Jean's quick, deft movements she reminded him of her mother, and he was not sure that he quite liked it. But the changes in her face that these three years had wrought were to the good—he felt that strongly. It was a rounder, sweeter face, the mouth more tender in expression, the eyes softer and less aggressive than they used to be; yet the whole firmer in outline and as beautiful as ever.

Seth took things easily for a month. Thanks to his constitution, a habit of temperate living, and youth, the prolonged hardships even of Santanella left no permanent weakness

behind, and after four weeks' holiday he felt as well able to do a man's work in the world as ever. The first point was to find the work, the second one to earn enough to marry. Both these things, before Seth had been a week in Chippewa, began to cause him no little anxiety, which in its turn did not tend to improve his temper, that three years' campaigning had considerably roughened. The quiet life at the Store soon became intensely irksome to him; the children were an unmitigated nuisance; Luke Selby bored him, and he could never see as much of Jean as he considered he had a right to do. Marriage was the only remedy for this; the way to it was by securing a reappointment as master of the school and by good luck and influence inducing the managers of that school to give him a sufficiently substantial salary. Circumstances were in his favour; the present schoolmaster was not a capable man, and was under notice of dismissal, and the chairman of the Board was Luke himself. No sooner, however, were Seth's practical difficulties in a fair way of clearing themselves than a vague uneasiness began to haunt him, which one day, four weeks after he came home, broke out into a definite and distinct trouble of mind. It struck him that Jean, apart from the sense of responsibility towards her home duties, was not as eager as himself for the arrival of their marriage-day. At first Seth scouted the notion as absurd. All this month she had spent every spare moment away from her work and her household exclusively with him. She had not even been to see Mrs. Burltson, and in their walks and drives had cheerfully discussed his plans and approved of his application for the school-mastership, and, at his request, had spoken to her father about the matter. Yet he was not content. It might be fancy, but at times he thought that she showed a tendency to be absent-minded when they were alone, a habit which was growing upon her. When, in the light of this thought, he looked back upon their talks together, he remembered that every plan for the future had been suggested by himself. Jean had passively agreed to them all, and had initiated nothing. With some women this would be natural enough, but it was not like Jean. In old days she had always been full of ideas—too full he had sometimes thought. Now she had none. Then, when he had spoken hopefully of his chances for the school through her father's position, she had been very unresponsive, and had obviously disliked speaking to him. At the time Seth had put

this down to a certain estrangement which he noticed had grown up between father and daughter; but taken with the rest, it might mean something very different.

At length Seth could keep his thoughts to himself no longer, and one day when they were out driving the impulse to probe this matter to the root fastened upon him.

'Jean, I want to ask you something,' he said. 'Do you know that we have been engaged three years?'

'It is a long time.'

'Do you really think so?'

She looked up quickly. 'Why do you ask that question?'

'I will tell you.' He looked away as he spoke. 'Since I have been home I have moved heaven and earth to get an appointment and see some clear road to our marriage. I want to get married, and I have a right to after all this time. I want to be first in your thoughts and to give my life to you. As things are now I worry and fret and wear until I could snap my own head off, as I did Sam's this morning, poor little chap. Now, you are very different; women always are, I guess, and you have a family to think and do for; I have not a soul. But patience—even yours—ought to have limits. Even a woman, if she really loves, must want to get married some time. Now lately it has struck me that—well—that I am doing all the talking about this thing, and that it is time you began—if you find it any ways interesting.'

He spoke brusquely at the end, and turned to her with a frown; then, seeing a troubled look in her face, he blamed himself for hurting her feelings.

'I have the children on my mind, Seth,' Jean said after a pause. 'I do want to make you happy, but I must not forget Sam and Tom and Mamy. I will tell you how I plan things out. In the spring—and I could not come to you before, whatever happened—Sam will go to work under father to learn the business, which may some day be his. Tom, who is to be a lawyer, as he seems the smartest of the boys, is to go away to a school at Marathon. Mamy is the difficulty; Mrs. Haniman would adopt her to-morrow, but the child clings to me, and I do not feel I should be doing my duty if I gave her up to any one else. What do you think? Would you mind very much if she came to live with us?'

'Is that all the trouble?' Seth exclaimed in a tone of genuine relief. 'That is nothing. Mamy and I are excellent friends; she



may come and welcome. Why didn't you tell me of this before?' He laughed, his sanguine nature already on the rebound, but Jean's face did not brighten, and Seth stopped laughing. 'Go on,' he said; 'there is something more.'

'Seth,' she said, with a touch of her old impulsiveness, 'I wish you had never asked me to speak to father.'

'Why?'

'He thought that I wanted to ask him a favour. He made me feel quite ashamed of it.'

Seth shrugged his shoulders. 'If a man may not ask a favour from his future father-in-law, especially when it will cost him nothing, what may he do?'

'It was I, not you, who had to ask it,' Jean retorted with a sudden flash that took Seth back three years of his life. 'But that is not what I wanted to say,' she added hastily; 'I did not mean to ask him a favour at all—I would have scorned to do such a thing. It was simply a matter of business, a good business for the Board, for you are the best teacher they ever had, and as I told father, you did not ask them to give you one cent more than you could honestly earn.'

'You told him that,' Seth exclaimed, spitefully cutting the horse with the whip. 'Why?'

'Why, Seth?' She looked at him in astonishment.

'I repeat why?' he continued, lashing the horse until he bolted. 'Keep quiet, you fool!' to the horse; 'if you don't slow down I'll cut you to pieces! I asked you to speak, Jean, instead of doing so myself, because the school must give me twice what the present man gets; that's all. I thought you would understand. Now, your father is just the man to take you at your word, for he hates me. Well, that chance is gone. But he is not the only member of the Board. I will see Selliger and Thorpe again and—by George, I did not think of it before—John has just been made a member; I will get at him.'

'Seth!'—Jean grasped his arm tightly—'you will not!'

'Don't be too sure,' Seth replied, setting his teeth, while something in her tone made him feel cold. 'The thing has to be done. I will earn the money they give me, no fear of that. But, first, I must get it. If I do not we should be no nearer marriage after I got the school than we are to-day; and rather than wait in this way I would go back to the army. I am in dead earnest, I assure you.'

He looked it as he lashed the frightened horse. But Jean did not seem to have heard his last words.

'If you go to John,' she cried, too angry for the moment to measure her words, 'and ask him to vote you public money, I will never respect you again. It would be mean, dishonourable, and quite useless. Indeed, I would advise you not to suggest such a thing to John.'

Seth turned from the horse and looked at her with whitening lips.

'Indeed !' he said slowly ; 'is that your opinion ? Then we will drop the subject.'

He did not speak again until they got home, but drove at a gallop all the way. When they reached the Store he led the horse at once to the stable and groomed it himself, and Jean did not see him until after she had put the children to bed. Then she found him reading in the parlour. Her anger had cooled by this time, though she was still hurt and surprised.

'Seth, dear,' she said, going straight to him, 'tell me that you did not mean what you said this afternoon.'

He threw his book away.

'My darling, I did, but I don't now. You were right, and I knew it. I am a savage, unprincipled brute. Until you belong to me for good and all beware my temper ! But I will not go to John.'

### CHAPTER XXX.

A LETTER came for Jean the next morning from Mrs. Burletson inviting her and Seth and the children to spend a day at the farm. Jean handed it to Seth. 'Shall we go ?'

'Why do you ask ? Don't you wish to ?'

Jean filled Mamy's plate with porridge before she answered, 'Yes, if you would enjoy it.'

'We will certainly go.' He told the children, and watched their delight with a curious grimness.

'You should have kept it a secret till after breakfast,' Jean said ; 'they will eat nothing now.'

They did not, and until they were allowed to leave the table talked incessantly of what they would do and see.

Upon their arrival at the farm the young people relieved

their elders of their presence and sought their old haunts and revelled there, while John and Seth went to inspect the stock and Mrs. Burletson and Jean sat in their accustomed nook in the garden.

'My dear, you are unwell.' It was the first remark Mrs. Burletson made as Jean settled back cosily into her chair.

'Don't say that, mother dear. I am only a little tired. I have not been sick, and now I feel—happy.'

She sighed a contented sigh, and looked dreamily across the fields waving with their crops of grain to the horizon line.

'It is eight months ago, to-day,' Mrs. Burletson said, 'since you brought us the news that Seth was a prisoner. Much has come and gone in those eight months.'

'Yes, indeed.'

Another pause, a very long one.

'Jean, my daughter, will you listen to me?'

Jean's dreaminess vanished at the old lady's tone, and her heart beat painfully.

'I must speak, child,' Mrs. Burletson went on, 'though God knows I am the last who should. Yet come what may you are too dear to me for my pride to stand against my duty. I promised your mother I would try and take her place. I speak now, as your mother, yours only. Jean, you are not happy, you, whose lover is home from the war, delivered from his peril through God's mercy by my dear John. Your face has care in it that I did not see a month ago. Why is this? What does it mean? Will you tell me, if you can?'

Jean considered a moment.

'It means, mother, she said—'it means that Seth and I do not seem to agree about things as we used to do. We are both to blame; but the fault is mostly mine. How did you think he looked?' She asked the question anxiously.

'He does not appear in very great spirits; but I do not know his face well enough. Ask John.'

She saw Jean shiver. 'Oh no.'

'Indeed he would not mind one bit. Why should he?'

'I could not trouble him. I know what is worrying Seth. It is want of money. He feels the waiting terribly, and thinks I might help him if I would.'

'You!' exclaimed Mrs. Burletson; 'does he want you to earn a living for him?'

'No, no. It is what I feel, what he thinks I feel.'

'What do you feel, my dear? Oh, be very sure. I have seen lives wrecked and lost that might have been so happy if girls had but looked deep enough into their hearts before they married. Your fate is in your own hands; but if it would relieve you to tell me anything——'

She paused and waited breathlessly.

'I cannot,' Jean said at last; 'I could not tell any one. Besides, I have decided. If Seth gets the place as school-master we'll be married in the spring. We shall be poor, but I don't mind that. I shall keep Mamy with me, and father will pay for her. Three years ago I promised to be Seth's wife; he went to the war for my sake then; he has no one else to care for him now. So I will do my best to make him happy. That is right, mother; I know it must be right.'

There was an appeal, almost a question, in the words, though they were said firmly enough. But there was no response from Mrs. Burletson; for perhaps the only time in her life she dared not give advice.

'I am afraid, Jean,' was all she said, 'my ideas would not help you any. I will keep them to myself.'

They were silent again, and looked out upon the garden and cornfields, as they had so often done in former days. But they sat no longer hand in hand; by imperceptible degrees Mrs. Burletson turned away, took up her knitting and became absorbed in it. A separation had begun—a separation which Jean felt would grow deeper and deeper as time went on—and her heart sank.

The guests left the farm early—far too early for the children, who grumbled vigorously. But Jean was firm, and they were home before seven o'clock. At nine Jean found Seth alone, waiting for the talk they always had before Luke came in from the Store. This evening she saw at once that he was out of temper, and a sense of weariness, almost of despair, overcame her. Jean did not remember that the sight of the substantial comfort on John's farm, and evidence of his ample means, were gall and wormwood to Seth. He had been thankful to get away from it all—from the keen-faced old lady who loved him not; even from John, whose cordiality and frank good-nature were an aggravation in themselves.

'I hope you enjoyed yourself,' Seth snapped out as Jean came in.

'Yes. I told you how good Mrs. Burletson has been to me, ever since mother fell sick.'

'Only Mrs. Burletson?'

Seth did not mean anything serious by the question, but he was in the kind of humour when it is a relief to be as disagreeable as possible.

Jean coloured. 'Of course I enjoy seeing John, if you mean that. He is the oldest friend I have.'

'And the best? If you want to say it, don't mind me. I am not jealous.' He spoke banteringly, but an old, old wound had stirred.

'The best,' Jean repeated—'the best that you and I have ever known.'

'Do you think so? How some people can change!'

Seth was really angry now. He had only spoken half the truth when he said he was not jealous. He did not fear John as a rival in Jean's affections, but her words of the day before were rankling still. 'Oh, I mean it,' he went on, in answer to a look of amazement in Jean's face; 'John is a good fellow. I have always said so; but it seems to me that you are the last person who should hold him up as a pattern citizen to me.'

'Please explain why.' The heat of old days, which was seldom seen in Jean now, had come to the surface again.

'That is easy,' he retorted. 'I have only to quote your own words. Who was it, when some of us volunteered for the war, and threw away our chances in life—and John did not—who said he was a coward, and that she could never respect such a man again, whatever his reasons for holding back might be? Then after we were engaged, and I warned you that we should have to wait years before we could be married, who said she would rather wait ten years for a man who did his duty, and then work for her living than marry one who meanly stayed at home, even though he had a million dollars a year? That was three years ago, you will say; I grant that, but you meant your words, and some of them hold good still. Wait a moment'—as Jean began to speak—'I have not done yet. I am sick of having John flung at my head. If you think he is so much greater than you used to do, perhaps you think me correspondingly less; indeed, I begin to guess this may be so after what you said the other day. Was your promise to marry me made under a mistake?' He flung the words out regardless

of consequences. The air had been full of thunder lately, and must be cleared.

‘Have you finished now?’ Jean said as he paused.

‘Yes, speak your mind.’

‘I will. You are unjust, and worse—not to me only, I don’t blame you for that, I deserve it for the wrong things I said three years ago; but to make a grievance out of what I said of John and to speak slightly of the man who for your sake faced certain death—that is mean. I can hardly believe my ears. Three years ago you defended John when every one misjudged him. You have changed indeed from the Seth I loved then.’

‘You loved,’ he said quickly. ‘Does that mean that your feeling is different now?’ He was pale and grave, his impatience and impetuosity killed by a sudden dread.

‘It means’—Jean caught her breath, startled by the turn he had given to her words—‘it means that if you seriously believe that anything I said about John in my blindness and ignorance is still true, then you are not the man I loved.’

‘In short, that now you care for John more than you care for me? Come, let me hear the truth.’

‘Seth! You are insulting and cruel. My words meant no such thing, and you know it.’

‘I beg your pardon, I do not know it. If you feel insulted I am very sorry; I do not intend to give you pain.’

‘What right have you to make such an insinuation?’

‘I don’t insinuate. For God’s sake, Jean, do not misunderstand me. I respect John, I say; I reverence you. When I brought in his name first it was a joke—in bad taste, I admit, but only a joke. Then I lost my temper. You are very angry at what I said—quite right; but I cannot help thinking there is something more on your mind, whether you are aware of it or not. Let me ask one thing more. Can you say now, solemnly, that you will take me as your husband and love me for better or worse, for richer or poorer, till death us do part—can you say that?’

There was a pause before Jean answered, only for an instant, but to Seth it seemed eternity. ‘I have promised to be your wife,’ she said in a low, steady voice; ‘I will keep that promise.’

He uttered an exclamation which sounded almost like an oath. ‘That is not enough; I want more than that. You must tell me——’

Jean covered her face with her hands. 'Not to-night. To-morrow we will talk it quietly out. I could not now. I am too tired.'

Seth looked at her, breathing hard; then he controlled himself, and drew her hands into his own and kissed her. 'Poor love, you are worn out with my tantrums. Go to bed at once. I will let it be.'

Jean's eyes filled with tears. All her anger had evaporated long ago, she felt weary and very grateful. 'You are good. Do not worry over me. It will be all right—to-morrow.'

When Jean had gone Seth took up a book to read; but he found the air of the room stifling, and went into the Store. This was worse, so he strolled out into the street, and avoiding all acquaintances and friends walked on until the town was behind him and he was alone in the silent starlit night. He remained out for two hours, and got back just as Luke was shutting up for the night.

'Late walking, Seth.'

'I like it best.'

'It is a way young folk have sometimes. I have been hunting for you.'

'On business?'

'Yes. The Board has met and fixed up about the school. They will offer it to you.'

'That so?'

'They took some time to do it. They wanted you, but balked at the money you need. The vote went in your favour at the last, though, and if fifteen hundred dollars a year and a house will meet your ideas, the thing is settled.'

Seth gave an exclamation of surprise. 'Indeed, yes. I never thought they would give so much.'

'Nor did I,' said Luke, with a dryness of tone which Seth noticed at once. 'Nor would they, but you had a friend who argued for you till he got his way. The thing came through the way it did because of him. You needn't say I said so.'

'Who was it? You?'

'No. John Burletson.'

## CHAPTER XXXI.

SETH was thoroughly brain-weary—tired out in body and brain—when he met Luke. He had been trying to analyse his talk with Jean and decide judicially whether she had only been indignant with his ill-temper, or whether her love had really been slowly dying in three years of separation until only duty remained. He had failed, as men under such circumstances always do fail, his mind becoming at last a mere pendulum swinging back and forwards. It was absurd to doubt her love ; it was certain that she did not love ; why should she have renewed her promise to marry him if her love were dead ? Why should she be so indignant at his reminder of his old sentiments if those sentiments had not undergone a revolution ?—and so on.

Two hours of such reflection will reduce the strongest man to imbecility. Seth walked home limp and nerveless. Then came Luke's news, and excitement took the place of lassitude ; hope became paramount ; and Seth went to bed to sleep soundly and dream happy dreams.

He woke betimes next morning and, with his spirits still at their best, sought Jean. There could be no time for any talk now, for the children pervaded the place, but he might find opportunity to tell her about the school. He caught her in the passage, and before he spoke turned her face to the light. He was struck in a moment by her paleness, the dark rings under her eyes, and the coldness of her fingers.

'Jean,' he exclaimed, 'you have not slept all night.'

'Not very much.'

'I have something to tell you—something most astounding!'

He felt her hands tremble and shrink. 'You mean about the school ?'

'You know it all, then ?'

'Father has just told me.'

He drew a slow, deep breath, and the light in his eyes died out. 'It is rather overwhelming, isn't it ?' he said faintly.

The clasp of her hands grew firm again. 'It is what you wished exactly.'

He looked at her with a dazed expression. There was not a spark of colour in her cheeks ; yet—she held his hand. 'I wish I could understand you, Jean.'



She shook her head and smiled at him. 'Do men ever understand women? Come to your breakfast, dear boy, and never mind me.'

He turned slowly to obey her, when the passage door was opened with a rush, and Sam tore up to them with a letter in his hand. 'It's for Seth—from the army,' he cried. 'I've run all the way from the post-office. I guessed it might be important.'

They laughed at the boy's earnest face, and then joined the others.

'From the captain of my company,' said Seth, when he had read the letter, looking at Jean. 'Grant is pressing Lee hard, he writes, and the army feel they have a man in command who means business at last. The cry is for men—fighting-men—not bounty-jumpers who get five hundred dollars for enlisting and run at the first shot. Cap. says there was never greater need for men than now, or a better chance of promotion.'

He turned to his letter again and read it slowly, one eye on Jean all the time, while his coffee cooled and his bacon remained untasted. At last he put it aside and began to eat. Suddenly, as if he had remembered something, he dropped his knife and fork. 'Excuse me, Jean. I have a man I want to see'; and leaving the table, he hurried away, half his breakfast still untasted.

Luke Selby looked after him knowingly. 'Is our school-master touched with war-fever again?'

'It is not likely,' Jean said, 'after what you told him.'

'Well, *you* know, I do not. If he should go it will be to stay. There will not be another vacancy in the school, that I can tell him. What else he is fit for I have not a notion, but it is not my business.'

Jean did her work very badly this morning. She was thankful it was not a holiday.

In an hour a message came from Seth. It was a scrawl in pencil on the leaf of a pocket-book. 'Don't wait lunch. I can't tell when I may be back.'

The note was brought by one of the lads from the Burletson farm, who said in answer to questions, while devouring doughnuts and milk, 'I don't guess he will be round to-day, Miss Jean, if you ask me. It is market-day, but the boss is staying at home with Seth, and sending Jim, our foreman, which I've never known him do before.'

At the farm John and Seth were alone together.

'They want me back at the front,' Seth had said by way of greeting, handing John the letter. 'I have just come to tell you that I reckon to go.'

John's reply had been to lead the way to the upper story of an old granary and point to a pile of corn-sacks. 'Set down there. Go right ahead and tell me what this means.'

'If Cap.'s letter had come twenty-four hours ago,' Seth continued, 'I would not have looked at it. Now it is different. owe it to you that you should see my reasons, though.'

'I see nothing yet.'

Seth clasped his hands across his knees and looked John in the face. 'It would be a wicked business for a man to go to the war if he were 'bout to marry.'

'Then you cannot go.'

'Yes; for I shall never marry.'

John looked up to see whether his companion had taken leave of his senses. 'What has happened, then?' Seth rocked himself to and fro as if in bodily pain, with white, set face. 'I do not know,' John went on before Seth could answer, 'that I have any business to answer the question. But why have you come to me at all?'

'Because I want advice—no—not advice; I mean I need to talk to some one I can trust, or I'll go mad. Jean does not care—that I—for me! Don't shake your head. D——n it, man, should I talk like this if I were not sure? No, she has not said so; she won't say so, but I know it now. See, I will tell you all about it from the beginning.' Then recollecting himself: 'No, I can't do that. But it was this way: I had not a suspicion until last night. Then we had a long talk, which made me feel very uneasy. I did not see clearly, though; the idea was too sudden—too terrible to realise all at once; but the more I thought about it the bigger it grew. Things that have happened since we came back from Georgia—things I had not noticed—took hold upon my mind last night and held me. But this morning, when I told her of the school, then I *knew*. She was brave—loyal to the last, God bless her! She does not know now that I have made up my mind to go—'

John stopped him. 'You have not told her?'

'Not yet.'

'Then go and do it at once.'

'I have not finished,' Seth went on,

John went to the granary door. 'When Jean knows, and has given you her answer, come back to me and we will talk all day if you wish. I will hear nothing till then.'

He was as pale as Seth now, and as much excited, though his voice was quiet. Seth went up to him. 'John, if you were any other man, what you say would be right. But after Santanelle this will not do. Jean shall know that I am going away; but you must tell her. I am determined upon that.'

'I tell her! You are mad.'

'Then I will write from Washington.'

'You are clean crazy, Seth.'

'I wish I were.'

'If you go to the war,' John went on, raising his voice, 'I tell you that you are a lunatic or a scoundrel.'

'Why?'

'When you and I were at the stables yesterday Jean and my mother talked of you, and mother seeing Jean was worried, asked the cause. She found that the chief one was your own poor chances—as you thought—of marriage. Your happiness was Jean's first consideration and her last. As you have said so much I will tell you something. After hearing this from mother I went to that school meeting. They had the place for you, but there was not enough money. I told them—they were all old friends—how it stood, and privately, out of respect to what you've done for your country all these years, they made the money up to fifteen hundred. After the war is over a representation will be made to the authorities for a pension for you, but even though that may fail the money will not. That I guarantee. Now, what room is there for such nonsense as you have in your brain?'

At this Seth smiled sadly, but the expression of his face became firmer than before.

'The thing is where it was, old friend. Though you shame me more than I thought was possible.'

'Pshaw! I did not do it for you. But what more do you want?'

'Her love!' Seth cried with sudden fierceness. 'I know as well—better than you—that she will marry me. But why? Because she has promised, and will not break her word. I will not have that, I tell you.'

'That cannot be all.'

'It is. If you doubt it, ask her yourself.'

‘God forbid.’

But Seth took his hand and pressed it hard. ‘John, old friend—*her* friend who has never failed her yet—stand by her and by me. Heaven knows we need it sorely enough.’

John faltered for the first time, and turned away. ‘What do you want me to do?’

‘Take a letter to Jean.’ John made an emphatic motion of dissent. ‘Wait till I have finished,’ Seth went on. ‘If you will do it I promise to stay here and see her again. If you won’t go then I am off to the front to-night. I swear I am.’

John set his teeth. ‘You would desert Jean and spoil her life?’

‘I will set her free and spoil my own. But this is foolishness. I know she does not care for me, so my mind is fixed. But if you will take a letter I’ll remain here till you get back, and give it another chance. If you do not I shall not write until I am with the boys.’

They looked one another in the eyes and did not speak for a minute.

‘Is there no other way?’ John groaned at last.

‘None—so help me God.’

‘If I go you promise to see her?’

‘Yes.’

‘Well, come, then.’

They walked to the house, passed Mrs. Burletson, to her great surprise, without a word, went to the study and shut the door. A few minutes later John came out alone. ‘Mother, I am riding to town. Seth remains till I return. I am taking Black Warrior, so I shall not be long. You shall hear all by and by.’

He kissed her and hurried away. The horse was a thoroughbred, and Chippewa was reached in six minutes. But though Black Warrior was in a lather and had covered his rider with flecks of foam, John was as pale as when he left the farm. He gave his horse to a boy at the Store, walked to the private door without a word of greeting to any one, and stood in the kitchen face to face with Jean.

‘Seth is well,’ he said quickly as she started up. ‘Allow me to shut that door.’ He did so, Jean watching him with wondering eyes. ‘I have brought you this letter. Read it, please; then we can talk.’

He gave her the note and went to the window. He heard

the rustle of paper. She had read it. The blow had fallen. With an effort he turned to look at her. She was standing, as if in a dream, looking into the fire, the letter in her hand, neatly folded. John breathed heavily a moment, and then spoke with difficulty. Her silence oppressed him. 'I will go now and bring him to you.'

She looked up at the words. 'Wait, please. I want to think a moment. Why did he not come himself?'

'He is crazed just now with the morbid fancy that you do not care. You know why I came instead?' John asked the question sharply.

'Seth doesn't tell me.'

'He might have done, I think,' John said with a touch of bitterness. 'I came because otherwise he would have left Chippewa without seeing you at all.'

She looked up with a quick questioning glance, but she did not speak.

'I could not allow that,' John went on huskily. 'It is just some fever in his blood. He loves you dearly all the time.'

'You are very good to Seth.'

'I did not do it,' he said coldly, 'for Seth's sake.'

She turned from him so that he could not see her face. 'It was very kind and thoughtful of you. I will write to him. He must certainly come and see me before he goes.'

She went to a side table and wrote a few words, sealed them up, and came back. John took the note mechanically.

'I want to ask you something,' he said, the words coming one by one as if against his will. 'I have no right—but we are old friends, you and I. Do you—don't you—love this man?'

'No,' she answered gravely, 'not as he loves me.'

'Then he was right after all.'

'What did he say?'

'That you would have married him because you promised, but that—that you did not care—enough.'

'That is true,' she paused, then went on hurriedly: 'I thought I was right to keep my promise to him. Now I see that I was very wrong. But he was poor and lonely. It seemed so hard, so cruel, to give him up after he waited all these years. Yet, it was not right. It was unjust to him and to—myself. I can see it now.'

She moved away to put the ink and pen into their places.

John stood and watched her, and then all at once he realised why Seth had made him come. It was absurd !—it was impossible—yet his head reeled with the thought.

‘Goodbye, Jean.’

‘Goodbye.’

She gave him her hand, and as John’s closed upon it all the passionate love and yearning that he had held down so long welled up into his heart and clamoured to be heard. He tried to throw it off from a feeling of loyalty to Seth, but it would not go. He went to the door and turned the handle ; then he closed it again, came back, and took her hands.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the farm the minutes came and went, and an hour passed before the black horse returned. Mrs. Burletson met John at the front door.

‘Seth in the study, mother ?’

‘Yes, but what has happened ? Quick, tell me, John.’

He kissed her lovingly. ‘I will, very soon, but I must go to Seth.’

Seth, however, was already there. A glance at John’s face told him all, and taking John affectionately by the hand he turned to Mrs. Burletson.

‘Congratulate me. Up to this morning I owed your son more than any man ever owed another. Now a bit of the debt is paid. John, old friend, I shall write to the President to-day and tell him that the boy who picked the apple did not get it after all.’

(Concluded.)

*HOW THEY FOUGHT THEN.*


---

THERE seems to be an irresistible attraction for the human mind in the tale of a fight well fought. The voice of Morality is unheard amid the clash of contending arms ; the pain and misery are lost to sight, or exist but as faintly shadowed forms in the glamour which envelops a famous victory. Many a poet has found in war the inspiration of his song, and has sung right well and nobly ; but there is something in the plain tale of an eyewitness, a vivid impression, a depth of reality, which the choice imagery of the greatest master fails often to attain. The one moves us as the disjointed news flashed straight from the seat of war, the other as an elaborate sketch, by an expert, of a battle as it might have been. So it may happen that poetry condemned by the critic for its lack of art, may yet be worthy to live for its human interest, as a faithful and striking picture of some event in the history of the past.

One such poem remains to us among the relics, scanty as they are, of our early literature. It is a mere fragment, a rough ballad in the old alliterative metre ; but it is not without interest for one who takes pride in the roll of British heroes.

The tenth century was drawing to a close. The freebooters of the north were harrying, as was their wont, the coasts of England. From Sandwich to Ipswich they slew and ravaged with impunity. At last, near Maldon in Essex, they were checked in their career of victory. Byrhtnoth, the King's Alderman, as in duty bound, had gathered here his levies, the poet perhaps among them.

The poem, as we have it, opens with the moment before the battle. Byrhtnoth draws up his men and rides along the line, giving words of counsel and encouragement. Then he dis-

mounts and takes his stand among his own retainers. From the other bank of the stream the herald of the corsairs shouts his defiance. 'Seamen bold send me to thee and bid me say that thou must quickly send gold as a surety; for better is it for you that ye should buy off with tribute our battle rush, than that we should meet in grim fight.' So runs the speech. Peace in return for tribute, or a doubtful fight against the dreaded warriors of the north; such was their hard choice. Many, as history tells, were wont to buy peace with submission; but not so Byrhtnoth. His is no craven answer. 'Hearest thou, pirate, what this people saith? Verily they purpose to give you tribute—spear and fatal dart and good sword. Carry to thy people a message of defiance; that here stands a noble Earl with his troop, who will protect this land, the kingdom of Æthelred my lord, his people and their fields. Too shameful, methinks, that ye should depart to your ships with our money and without a fight, now that ye are come hither thus far into our land. Not so easily shall ye win booty; but first shall point and edge and the grim war-game decide between us, before we pay tribute.'

There is a fine tone of irony in these words, though it is not the irony begotten of confidence. Byrhtnoth hardly expects to win; none the less he will carry the matter through as becomes a warrior and a king's representative. His duty is to fight, so fight he will.

The invaders have reckoned without the tide. The rising flood bars their path; they must wait and watch until the ebb. At length the moment comes; they attack alike by bridge and ford. The defence is stout, they cannot force a passage. But soon there is a change in the aspect of the fight, a change which does honour to the spirit if not to the wisdom of Byrhtnoth. He has driven back the foe from the treacherous ford and narrow bridge; this is not enough for his pride. They ask a fair and equal fight: let them have their desire. He draws back his men and offers battle, hand to hand. 'Now is your way open, come quickly to us; God alone knows who shall rule the field of slaughter.'

Perhaps it was not wise, not in accord with the art of war; but it is hard to blame the spirit of fair play, the wish to give his full chance even to an enemy. This is but one of many such cases in our history, and who shall say that it is not, in the end, for the best? It comes of treating war, as did the ancient



Greeks in their better days, as a friendly trial of strength. The fight is stern ; each party strives its best for the mastery, but they bear no malice when all is over. The victors grant a truce to bury the dead ; prisoners are ransomed ; the armies break up and return, each man to his home. A battle is but an Olympic contest on a larger scale ; a football match with an increase in the element of danger. Such, at its best, is the Greek ideal. War is a trial of strength between men, who take the risks willingly and accept the consequences, if defeat be their portion. The weak and unarmed are spared the horrors of its devastation.

The British lock their shields and await the onset. The birds of prey scent the battle from afar. 'Then a clamour rose to heaven ; ravens came flying, the eagle greedy for its prey.' Now we hear nothing but the clash of steel, the twang of the bows, the rending of shields and the fierce cries of the combatants. The poet knows by hearsay of many deeds of valour, but there is no false distinction between chiefs and men. There is no tale, as in Homer, of one hero ranging the field and putting thousands to flight. Even the leader is but mortal ; a little braver, as is fitting, than the rest, but none the less subject to death. Twice he slew his man, hand to hand. 'The Earl was the blither. Laughed then the valiant man, gave thanks to his Maker for this day's work that the Lord had granted him.' But now, an arrow shot at random wounds Byrhtnoth. His sword arm is broken as he rushes on the enemy. He falls, still urging on his men. Then, commending his soul to God, he is cut to pieces.

The leader has fallen, and with him two faithful henchmen in a vain effort to save him. Suddenly the poet turns from words of honour to words of shame. True to fact and to life, he does not paint all as perfect. Not all the British are heroes to whom fear is unknown ; not all are ready at the call of duty. Many save themselves. 'More than was fitting, had they minded them of the favours he had done them to their honour.' Two above all, Godrinc and Godwig, the sons of Odda, are branded for all posterity as traitors. Flight, from a hopeless field, might be condoned ; but far worse was their fault. On the chief's own war-horse, marked by its well-known trappings, they fled—a dishonour to him thus suspected of flight, a blacker disgrace to themselves. 'So had Offa in a by-gone day said to him, what time he held assembly in the place

of meeting, that many there spake right valiantly who would not endure at time of need.'

It is a relief to turn again from this sorry picture to the fortunes of the fight. Not all are sons of Odda. There are still left the hearth-companions of Byrhtnoth, as the old phrase goes. Theirs it is to avenge him, or die around his corpse. One gives voice to the thoughts of all. 'Let us be mindful of our boasts which we spake over the mead cup. Now is the time to prove our words. I am of noble race, and will not go back to be twitted at home for that I left this army, now that my lord lies all hewn in the battle—he who was both my kinsman and my lord.'

Again the poet is true to life and to the time. Here is no vague talk of country and freedom; the men of that day did not fight for ideals or abstractions. A sense of personal pride and honour, loyalty to a leader and friend, the mutual trust of the members of a small and united troop—these were for them the grounds of heroism and self-sacrifice. And so it has been throughout our history. How many battles have been won by loyalty to the regiment, faith in its officers, and a pride of temper which will not yield; how little do the ideals of duty, patriotism, justice, beloved of the poet and orator, inspire the deeds which are the subject of their panegyric!

The fight is at a standstill while the British warriors make speeches; at least this is the impression conveyed by the poem. This interlude might perhaps be spared; but we can hardly blame the poet. He does but express, in set dramatic form, the thoughts and motives which influenced the actors. We may be grateful to him for the glimpse that he gives us of the mind and character of these our sturdy ancestors.

'Then they strode forth, recked not of life; then did the retainers bravely fight, grimly with spear in hand. And they prayed God that they might avenge their dear lord and work slaughter on their enemies.' Once more we are in the midst of the turmoil. Even a hostage from the north, a Northumbrian, joins in the defence against the invader. Perhaps it was only the ardour of a brave man roused by the spirit and example of Byrhtnoth; or, it may be, that even at that time a Briton was dimly conscious of the claims of race, and could sink his private feuds in the face of a common foe. Man after man breaks from the cover of the shield-wall and hurls himself upon the opposing ranks. One by one they are cut down

until the body of their fallen chieftain lies amid a heap of dead and dying comrades. How like is this to that later scene, familiar to all from childhood, where

‘The stubborn spearmen still made good  
The dark impenetrable wood.’

How like, but yet how different ! The unknown poet has the happier lot. From the standpoint of the present we can look back on Byrhtnoth and his faithful band as early representatives of the unity of Britain against invasion from beyond the sea. In so much, he who sings of their brave deeds can claim the higher praise, rude though his art may be and halting his verse.

The fight is drawing to a close. One by one the staunch retainers meet their death. They, at any rate, have justified their boasting words. ‘Soon then was Offa hewn up in fight ; yet had he performed his promise to his lord, as he boasted in time past before his ring-giver, that they should both ride into the town, homeward, unharmed, or fall together in the press and die on the field of slaughter. He lay, as a retainer should, by the side of his lord.’

The last words of the fragment are from a white-haired warrior, an old comrade of Byrhtnoth. ‘Spirit shall be the sterner, keener the heart, fiercer the anger, now that our kinsman lies low. Here lies our Earl, all hewn up, a valiant man on the field ; may he rue it for ever who now from this war play would fain turn back. I am old in years ; I will not from this place, but will lay me here by my lord, by the side of one so dear.’

Then the poem breaks off ; but we know the end from the old Chronicle. The invaders won the day ; the natives were forced to sue for peace. Byrhtnoth judged only too well of the result ; he fought with but small hope of victory.

The story is a tragedy in little ; the ending as mournful as tragedy could wish ; but so much the greater is the human interest it affords. It is direct and plain even to the point of rudeness. But this very simplicity of form adds to the reality of the picture. The poet’s aim is not to harrow our feelings ; he uses no art to enhance the pathos of his tale ; none the less it may be that the highest effort of art would fail to effect more than do his simple words. The emotions which appeal most strongly to the great majority have no need of high-flown,

language or abstract terms for their expression. The English mind has a deep-rooted liking for the concrete, the touch of reality ; and reality the poet gives us. His heroes are not puppets, but men whose words and deeds are real. They are very human in their failings ; so much the easier is it to admire their noble deeds. They are surely worthy of a place on the roll of those loyal men and true, leading a forlorn hope, fighting undismayed at any odds, whom the world has ever honoured as heroes.

---

## MRS. PADBURY.

---

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. . . .  
The present eye praises the present object.”

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

‘I’m sure *I* don’t want to shift,’ said Mrs. Padbury emphatically. ‘I said to George directly I heard about the place, “I s’pose now you’ll be wanting to go and live up at Green Hill, but I’d sooner by half stop down here,” I says. I shouldn’t never feel at home like up there.’

‘It makes a deal of work, shifting do,’ Mrs. Brain agreed; ‘still it’s a better house up there nor what this one is, and it’s a great thing to be in regular work.’

‘That’s it,’ said Mrs. Padbury; ‘if it hadn’t a been that we was so short all the winter when George was out o’ work, I’d never a given in to him, but it don’t seem as if any one ought to refuse a good place when they’ve got children; but it’s a long way for ’em to come to school, and as for the house being better, well, this ’un’s a poor place I know, but any one gets fond of a place as they’ve lived in, and I can’t *abear* the thoughts of leaving it.’

‘You’ve lived here a good bit,’ said Mrs. Brain.

‘All my life except one year after we was first married, when we lived up town, where Mrs. Brooks lives now, but I was glad enough to get back here.’

‘Well, I never!’ said Mrs. Brain, ‘I likes a change now and again. I shouldn’t like to feel as I was come to the house I should die in. Me and Sam have moved six times since we’ve been married.’

‘I couldn’t do wi’ that at all,’ Mrs. Padbury remarked decidedly, as she retired into her house; a somewhat lengthy process, for the door had sunk and always stuck at a certain point, and Mrs. Padbury was stouter than she had been. Having squeezed through she came in contact with a shabby moreen curtain hung across the doorway, and at length

emerged in the kitchen. It was a poor place, as she had said ; it was about twelve feet by ten, and the builder had committed the unpardonable sin of putting the front door opposite the back door, the result being a draught which rendered it quite impossible for any human being to sit by the fire in comfort. At this moment, however, the fire was not being wasted, for no less than three cats were seated in front of it. Mrs. Padbury stooped down and ejected them summarily with a sweep of the hand, but they were used to her, and two of them returned to their places at once, while the third leapt on to her shoulder, where it remained, monarch of all it surveyed, while she got the dinner ready. She had a weakness for animals, and the neighbours' cats had found it out, and preferred her draughty hearthstone to their own warmer homes. She smacked them with one hand and fed them with the other, and ordered them away in savage terms and dulcet tones, and they had learnt her ways and purred serenely by the fire—till the little Padburys came in.

There were two canaries and a bullfinch in cages by the window, so hung that any unwary person sitting on the window seat could not fail to knock his head against one of them on rising. However, the window-seat, being half filled up with geraniums in pots, besides being the general receptacle for any article not in use at the moment, offered few temptations as a seat. The pictures were useful as well as ornamental, for behind them Mrs. Padbury kept all her papers, letters, bills, club cards, and a few unframed photographs. She was rather proud of having thought of such a plan instead of filling up her drawers with such things ; the only drawback was that in searching for any particular paper she generally contrived to jog the picture and cause them all to fall to the ground. But her equanimity was proof against such minor annoyances ; she would merely remark, 'Well, now, there !' and replace them behind 'Mated' or 'Checkmated,' she never could remember which the next time she wanted them.

To-day, however, she was less placid than usual, and when the children came in from school and proceeded to relate various incidents of the morning at the tops of their voices, she bade them wipe their boots and not all speak at once with a touch of sharpness which somewhat surprised them, and caused her immediate compunction. Consequently she forbore to interfere when Willie, the youngest, aged three,

seized upon the family umbrella which stood behind the door, and the fracture of one, at least, of its ribs would soon have followed, had not the entrance of Mr. Padbury created a diversion.

Quietness only reigned in that house when the family (including the cats and the birds) was eating or sleeping. On this occasion they found the task of eating herrings without swallowing the bones sufficient to absorb their attention for a time. Then Annie started a conversation.

'When be us going up to live at Green Hill, pap?' she asked.

'Next week, but I thinks we'll have to leave you behind,' replied Mr. Padbury waggishly.

'I shall run after you, then,' returned Annie, undaunted.

'Why you won't like to live all up there, shall you? here's mother think's you'll get lost every day coming down to school.'

'I shall walk through the water,' remarked Willie, with his mouth full.

'It's all very well for pap to laugh at me,' said Mrs. Padbury resentfully, 'I knows what it'll be in bad weather. You'll come in wet through, and wear out all your boots, and be tired to death, and *that* cross—and I sha'n't have a minute's peace every day till you're back in case you've tumbled into the ford—Willie! leave Tiny alone this minute. I never see such a cruel boy! How'd you like pap to pull your nose like you pulls Tiny's tail?'

'I couldn't scrat he back like Tiny can scrat me,' returned Willie, but he allowed Tiny to walk majestically away.

George Padbury turned to his wife,

'I'm sorry you're so against it all, Liz,' he said. 'I've settled with Will Martin to let us have his cart to move the things up o' Monday. I don't altogether like it you know, but it's better nor being so short as we was in the winter, ain't it?'

'Oh yes, I wouldn't be so silly as not to go,' said Mrs. Padbury, with an effort, 'and it don't make it no better to put off. I thinks, now we've settled to go, I'll be glad to get the shifting over.'

'You'll like it when you're there, I dessay. The house is a lot nicer nor this 'un, you know. There's two front rooms and——'

'What's the good of a front room if you've nothing to put in it? But there! I don't mean to say another word against it.'

I've said that a many times I know, and been as bad next minute,' Mrs. Padbury admitted with a rueful laugh, 'don't you take any notice of me, George.'

Mr. Padbury laughed too, and went back to his work.

Poor Mrs. Padbury! no one understood how hard she felt it to leave her old home. She knew she was unreasonable to mind going a mile and a half away; it was a great thing for George to have a regular place, and she ought to be pleased at the prospect of being so much better off. There would be less anxiety in the winter, and they would be able to live better, but she could not help dreading the change. She was a very affectionate woman, and her capacious heart took in, not only every living creature round her, but every plant in the garden, and every object she had always been accustomed to see. There was an orchard sloping down to the road opposite to the Padburys' house, and she could never have expressed, even to herself, how much the shadows of those apple-trees were to her. But she could never remember a day when she had not noticed them; she knew how the lights and shades fell at each hour.

The plants in the garden too, the old man that she always pinched as she passed it, the japonica up the house, whose name she never could remember, the honeysuckle on the gate which knocked your hat off as you went through unless you were careful, the periwinkles under the wall—all were friends of her youth, and part and parcel of the spot where they grew; even if they could be transplanted they would not look the same in a different place, any more than the old bits of furniture would look the same in a new house. Only George and the children would always be the same, 'and I'm a great silly to mind,' she reflected, 'but there! it do make me cross when they wants me to be pleased. I'll have fowls to look after though.'

The prospect of fowls seemed the brightest spot in the future, so she fixed her mind bravely upon it. But it was poor consolation when the day actually came and she saw her things placed in the waggon. Mrs. Padbury could not keep back a few tears as she looked round the empty room; she would have shed more if Annie had not been suddenly overpowered by her feelings and burst into a howl. Mrs. Brain also was rather lachrymose when she said goodbye, so Mrs. Padbury felt it incumbent on herself to be cheerful, and remarking to



Mrs. Brain, 'I daresay I shall often come down when I've time,' and to Annie, 'Now, Annie, us mustn't cry when we gets to the ford or there'll be a flood,' she left the old place 'with a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.'

Lucy and Willie were packed into the cart with the furniture, Annie and her mother walked. Down the long hill along the stony road between wide strips of grass and overgrown hedges, across the little footbridge over the ford, up a much steeper hill the other side, and then a good way to the left over comparatively level ground ; at last they reached the house, where Mr. Padbury was already at work getting things straight. There was no time for sentiment, they all set to and worked with a will, and the evening saw them fairly settled. It was not until the children were in bed that Mrs. Padbury had time to step outside and look at the view that had been hidden by the high hedges on the way up.

Big furrowed fields, shaded by grand old elms in the hedge-rows or standing out in groups, sloped irregularly down from the garden to the little river, of which she could see the water glinting here and there, though generally its course was only marked by a waving line of willows. On the other side were the same rich meadows and wooded fields, some of grass and some of corn ; the slope of the hill was much more gradual, and about half way up the church tower and the grey roofs of the village showed among the trees. The top of the hill was crowned by a thick wood, and to the right it dipped sharply, letting in a vista of hills behind hills. The sun was setting behind a bank of clouds below which the sky was bright and gold, giving that curious effect of a dark and clearly defined horizon, while the middle distance is hazy and bright and blue. Altogether a typically Warwickshire scene. Mrs. Padbury stood looking for some time. Tired as she was it seemed more restful to stay outside than to go in and sit down.

'Nice view, ain't it ?' presently said George at her elbow.

'Yes, it's very pretty,' she answered meditatively ; 'that wood hangs over the top of the hill just like the ivy do over the churchyard wall.'

'It wants clearing up at this end, it be got so thick,' remarked George practically ; 'well ! it's a better look out nor that 'ere old orchard, don't you think so, Liz ?'

But this was more than Mrs. Padbury could admit even to herself, so she answered sharply—

'I don't know about that, the orchard was good enough for me, and we'll get the wind something cruel up here,' and went into the house; Mr. Padbury followed chuckling. 'Her'll take to it right enough in time,' he reflected.

It was certainly a great change, and it took all the family some time to get used to their new circumstances. The garden seemed very large after their old strip, divided from the Brain's by a row of stones; and the house was a palace. A passage with a good room on each side, and a back kitchen besides, and a landing and three bedrooms, it was quite overpowering! If only they had a few more things to put about, but certainly the place looked rather bare. But they made the best of it, and turned what should have been the parlour into a conservatory. It had a big window looking south, and Mrs. Padbury was delighted to find how well her pot plants did there. The fowls were a great interest both to her and the children, and they set up a dog too.

The chief disadvantage to the place was the absence of neighbours, but Mrs. Padbury minded that less than she had expected to; she had plenty to do all day, and there were the creatures to look to, and George coming in to meals, and the children coming home to tea seemed much more of an event now that they did not come home to dinner, and she often walked down to the village. It was little more than a mile by the short way across the fields. And it was impossible to be dull when there was so much to look at and notice, the sky always changing, the cloud shadows passing over the fields which looked so different at different times in the day, and the changing aspect of the woods as the year went on.

On the whole Mrs. Padbury was very happy at Green Hill, though she suffered at times from fits of unreasonable homesickness, when everything seemed bare and cheerless, and she would have given anything to get back to 'the old place.' But these fits became fewer as time went on. She had always been weakly and ailing before, and the physical good that the change to a more airy and drier habitation had done her could not but improve her spirits with her health. By the time the winter came she would hardly have gone back if she could, but this she would never own even to herself, much less to her husband. George was fond of drawing comparisons between the two houses, always in favour of the present one, and that Mrs. Padbury would never allow. She was always down upon

him like a shot with some sarcasm, which was none the less biting for being somewhat irrelevant, on which he would chuckle softly, and look up at her with a twinkle in his eye that showed he had only been trying to get a rise out of her. He was always endeavouring to trap her into saying she liked Green Hill, but she knew what he wanted, and was on her guard. The secret consciousness that her loyalty to her old home was wavering made her resent any outspoken aspersions on it all the more vehemently.

The winter was mild and open until after Christmas; then came a period of snow and frost followed by a slow chilly thaw. February Fill-dyke acted up to its name. It rained constantly, till the river looked quite imposing, and every twig and bent were dripping. The field way to the village was impassable for some time, and the water at the ford was unpleasantly deep. The little Padburys had to stay away from school for several days, to their great disgust.

One morning, however, although it was raining a little, it looked so much like clearing up that they prevailed on their mother to let them go.

'It's a pity to start before it stops,' she remarked, 'but I s'pose as you'll be late if you waits,' so she packed them off in cloaks and with the umbrella, and turned to her usual occupations.

She was busy in the house that morning, and it was not until nearly twelve o'clock that she suddenly realised that it had grown darker, and that the rain had never stopped. Looking out she saw that the sky was completely clouded over, the fields looked a dull uniform grey, and the rain was coming down as if it would never leave off.

She felt vexed that she had let the children go to school; however, bad as it looked, it might clear before they came out.

George Padbury took a desponding view of the weather when he came home to dinner.

'It's the worst day we've had yet,' he said; 'you was a silly to let they children go to school.'

'I thought it 'ud clear up,' said Mrs. Padbury. 'It looks a lot worse now though. It's allus worse when you don't see no shapes of clouds.'

'You're a nice one,' continued George, 'allus thinking in the summer as they'd be drowned in the ford, and then sending 'em through it in a flood.'

'Oh, George! be there a flood?' cried poor Mrs. Padbury, in great alarm.

'The meadows be all flooded, as you can see from here, and Steve Marshall come up about an hour ago, and he said as the water was up level with the bridge when he come over, and it's bin raining ever since, and don't look like stopping, so it 'ull be well over by four o'clock I should think if it ain't now.'

'Oh dear, oh!' cried Mrs. Padbury, gazing helplessly out of window. 'Whatever be us to do? Can't you go down for 'em?'

'No, that I can't. I've got to go to Binnington this afternoon, whether or no,' said Mr. Padbury decidedly. Then, feeling sorry he had so roused his wife's fears, he added consolingly.

'Don't you worrit, Liz. They can come round by Norton I expect, or praps Mrs. Brain 'll keep 'em for the night if it's too bad; that 'ud be best.'

'Yes, if they'll stop,' said Mrs. Padbury despondently; 'but you know our Annie—if her says her'll come, her 'ull, if it's ever so bad. And how am I to know if they've stopped or if they've tumbled into the water?'

'Well, I'll go round and see when I gets back,' said George; 'they'll be right enough. Don't you go fancying 'em dead all the afternoon.'

But his wife's mind was not so easily set at rest, and when he was gone she spent most of the afternoon tormenting herself and gazing out of window.

If only the rain would stop! but it was coming down harder than ever; she could almost see the water rising in the meadows. What a splashing the horse's feet made in the lane as George passed the house on his way to Binnington. When would he be back? she wondered. Not before six at the earliest. Perhaps the children would get home first after all. It would make them nearly an hour later than usual if they came round by Norton; perhaps some one would drive them through the ford if it was not too bad for a horse to get through.

Any way they would be wet to the skin, and cold.

The thought came as a relief. She must get ready for them; and she turned resolutely from the window and made up the fire; then she lighted a fire in the bedroom and put dry clothes to warm; then, 'I'll make 'em some broth,'

she thought, 'that'll warm 'em better nor tea, and be something to do.'

By the time her preparations were finished the noise of the rain was much less. She went to the window again. It was a steady drizzle now; the sky was still that uniform grey, everything was grey, the fields scarcely looked green at all, the woods only looked like darker smudges of the same neutral colour, and the horizon was lost in the formless clouds. No colour anywhere; on the hedges near the house the late haws were shining with wet, and drops were hanging from every twig and berry, but they gave no brightness, only a mocking steely glitter. Blank despair seized on Mrs. Padbury's soul as she watched the rain.

The clock striking four roused her; she went back to the fire and poked it recklessly. Then an idea struck her.

She might go round by Norton herself, and meet the children coming out of school, and ask Mrs. Brain or somebody to keep them for the night. No! it was four o'clock; she would be too late. Why had she not thought of it sooner?

She felt furious with herself for having wasted the afternoon.

Now that the idea of meeting the children had once taken possession of her she could not rest in the house. She would go down to the ford, and then, so long as she did not see them, she could be easy.

The children had the umbrella and the rain was still pouring down, but she had worked herself up to such a pitch of anxiety as to be past caring for a wetting. She tried at first to keep her arms under her shawl as she made her way along the lane, but the rain came through it, and soon she felt it soaking through her hat and streaming down her face; and at each step the water swished in her boots, and her petticoats, heavy with wet and mud, seemed to beat her back. Still she hurried on to the turn down the hill; now she could see where the ford ought to be, but in its place a great river was hurrying along. The bridge was under water, all but the top of the handrail, and on the other side were two small figures, the sight of whom made her pull herself together and run down the hill. It was easier going there than in the lane, for the road was washed bare, and little streams were hurrying noisily down it. To Mrs. Padbury's overwrought fancy they

seemed to be carrying her down with them, she felt as if she would run on right into the water, right across to her children. She was almost surprised to find herself stopping on the brink, every pulse beating like a sledge-hammer and a tearing pain in her side, but with room in her mind for nothing but the one question which she vainly tried to shout across the stream.

‘Where’s Lucy?’

Her voice sounded hoarse and feeble. She could not make Annie hear. The child seemed to be speaking, shouting something, but her mother strained her ears vainly to catch a word. That rushing sound of water—was it from the river at her feet, or was it something in her own brain—seemed to fill her head, and take away all power of thought, everything but a terrible fear for Lucy.

Had she tried to cross the flood? Was her little body now floating away, far down the meadows, among the willow trees? Would George come home and look down the hill, and see *something* carried here and there on the water, and not guess it was his child till the flood went down, and they found her on the grass—and now— What was Annie doing?

She had been speaking to Willie, and now Mrs. Padbury, with a thrill of horror, beheld her stepping into the water. Was she thinking of wading across? Surely she would be washed away. It was too much for her mother’s already overwrought brain.

‘Go back! go back, Annie!’ Mrs. Padbury shrieked wildly; but it was vain to call across that rushing stream. ‘Go back, go back! O God! make her hear! Go back, Annie! O God, save her, save her!’

Her voice died away in a desperate prayer, her knees shook under her, she would have run into the water herself to meet the child, but she could not move, she could only gaze wildly, murmuring ‘Save her! save her!’

Annie, however, seemed to have her wits about her. She came on steadily enough. When the water was up to her knees she got on to a heap of stones which raised her well up; then on the bridge. She held firmly to the hand-rail and came on, very slowly and with frequent pauses. Now she was at the end of the bridge, she must come down. No friendly heap of stones this side. The water was up to her shoulders and she staggered a moment, when, with a sudden start her

mother dashed in to meet her, and, hand in hand, they reached the comparatively dry land.

‘Where’s Lucy?’ gasped Mrs. Padbury.

Annie had not much breath left, but she managed to answer,

‘Stopping at school. I’ve told Willie to go back there.’

‘Willie! Oh, Annie! he’s coming after you. He’s crying; look—he’s afraid to go back by hisself. Oh! he’ll never get across.’

‘Go back, Willie!’ cried Annie, as vainly as her mother had called to her. Willie came on along the heap of stones, but the space between them and the bridge was too wide for his short legs to step across; he slipped down, off his feet.

‘Oh, he’ll be drowned!’ cried Annie, bursting into tears; but Mrs. Padbury had recovered her nerve now, in the face of a real danger.

‘Don’t you come in again, Annie, whatever you do,’ she said emphatically, and then she hurried to the child’s help. He had fallen against the bridge, and had managed to catch hold of it and pull himself up on to it; but the fall, and the water all round had quite unnerved him, and he was clinging wildly to the hand-rail, unable to stand upright, much less to come on a step. Mrs. Padbury made her way to him, but to get him across was a more difficult matter. She tried to pick him up, but he would not loose his convulsive hold of the rail, and as she stooped over him she turned suddenly giddy, and had to clutch at it herself and sit down on the bridge. She felt in despair.

‘Willie,’ she cried, ‘you must come on! Let mother carry you. You’ll be drowned if you stop here; it’s all right you know if you’ll come on; why, look how nicely Annie came over. Come on, Willie. Mother’ll be cross if you don’t. Hold on with one hand then an’ let me take the other. Poor pap’ll come home and be wanting his tea if you don’t come, and Tiny’s crying, I know; he’s shut out in the garden and no one to let him in till we gets back, and there’s a fire in your room and some beautiful nice broths, and the water won’t hurt you. There! that’s a good boy. Hold mother’s hand tight, come on.’

He had loosed one hand and let her take it, but he still clung to the bridge with the other. Still, anything to get him to move, she felt thankfully, as she slipped off the bridge and

stood beside it. The water was up to her shoulder, but, holding on to the bridge with one hand and grasping Willie with the other, she managed to move along sideways and induce him to do the same. Their progress was terribly slow. Over and over she was almost carried off her feet, and more than once Willie stopped and cried that he couldn't come on, he would fall in. She felt drearily as if she had spent a lifetime struggling in the water, each step seemed harder than the last, and she had no voice left to encourage him.

Now, at last, they were at the end of the bridge. She gathered herself together for one last effort, seized the child in her arms, made a few more steps, then fell forward on her knees but towards the edge, and with Annie's help managed to crawl out of the water. Then she lay in the road, utterly exhausted, Willie not much better, and poor Annie sobbing with cold and fright and helplessness.

It was some time before Mrs. Padbury could attempt to rise and drag herself up the hill. Then it was very slowly and painfully, with frequent pauses. She told the children to run on home, but they refused to leave her, and for their sakes she struggled on. If they would have gone on without her she would almost have given up, but they were wet through and she must get them home as soon as possible, or they would catch their deaths. So she toiled on through the gathering darkness, and at last a welcome sound struck on her ears.

"Hi! Liz!"

"Oh, I run, Annie," she gasped, and Annie flew up the hill into her father's arms.

"Why, you're wet enough. Have you been in the water?" he asked.

"Yes, we all have, and mother's bad," she answered incoherently, and he put her hastily from him and ran to his wife.

"Well, you are a great silly," he began, as she caught at his arm; then, with a sudden change of tone, "Why, Liz, old girl!"

"Oh, George!" "I can't walk any further," she gasped, and he picked her up and carried her off like a baby, at a pace the children could hardly keep up with.

She revived a little when they reached home, and he helped her to undress, refusing to pay any attention to the children until she was safe in bed. Annie whipped off her own and Willie's wet things as quickly as she could, and soon felt her



spirits return. Mrs. Padbury insisted feebly on their both getting into bed, and George warmed up the broth and fed them all by turns. Annie told him the history of the afternoon with great gusto : how it had rained all day, and Lucy had coughed in school, and the schoolmistress had said they couldn't possibly go home, and they must all sleep there, at any rate Lucy ; and she, Annie, had known mother would be frightened if they didn't come back and had said she would try to anyhow, and Willie wouldn't stay without her, so they had left Lucy and come down to the ford, and it was all over the bridge, and mother had come to the other side, and how she had tried to send Willie back to the school while she came across, but he had turned frightened and mother had had to go in and help him across, and they were so tired and so cold coming up the hill, and wasn't Willie a naughty boy not to go back when she told him ?

'I went in the water 'cos Annie did,' Willie remarked placidly.

'Annie's bigger nor you, and she didn't get frightened in the middle,' returned his father ; 'you'd ought to have gone back, Will. I wonder mother didn't take you back instead of bringing you on.'

'Well, I never thought of it,' said Mrs. Padbury, with a rueful laugh. 'I was a stupid, but I don't know as I should have liked to have left Annie to have come home alone like.'

'Well, it don't matter if you aren't made yourself ill.' 'D'you feel any better ?'

'Oh ! yes, alot better,' said Mrs. Padbury cheerfully, though she was aching all over. She could not shake off the effects of the wetting and the fright she had had as easily as the children seemed to. She did not complain, but all night she lay frowning with pain ; even if she dozed off for a minute it was only to wake in terror, and sleeping or waking she never lost the sense of being borne down by a weight of water, or of toiling up hill and never getting to the top. George was alarmed the next morning, when she suddenly fainted away on trying to get up. He made her promise to stay in bed, and sacrificed his dinner hour in order to fetch the doctor, not without a groan over the trial of living a mile further from everything than anybody else, and in a place where there was no one to send.

The doctor looked grave when he saw Mrs. Padbury, whom

he declared to be suffering from rheumatic fever. He, too, had cause to lament that extra mile, for she hovered between life and death, and required constant attention for several weeks. George nursed her devotedly, and Annie was very useful, but it was a bad time for them all. Mrs. Brain came to stay for a time, and pulled her through the worst of the fever, but she was visibly pining to get home, and her children were always coming after her. Mr. Padbury sighed for a next-door neighbour to come in and out, and wished over and over again that they had never left the old house. He gave vent to the wish more freely when he noticed that it never failed to bring a wan smile to his wife's face.

At last Mrs. Padbury was pronounced out of danger, and joy reigned at Green Hill. Her brave spirit helped her on, and when she had once fairly turned the corner it was not very long before she was downstairs. She found the kitchen preternaturally and uncomfortably tidy under Annie's rule, but she was too glad to be in it again to mind, and after being rapturously welcomed by the cats and the dog, and paying her respects to the birds, she stepped outside the door to feast her eyes on the outside world.

The river had returned to its bed and only glinted here and there through the trees ; the meadows were a sight to rejoice any heart, the grass showing that thickness and depth of green which is absolutely satisfying to the eye, while the distant woods were soft with their purple shadows and tender green veil of unfolding leaves. The pure, bright blue of the sky and the whiteness of the clouds added to the joy Mrs. Padbury felt as she looked around.

'Pretty, ain't it, Liz ?' said Mr. Padbury, coming up behind her as he had done on the day they first came there.

'Oh, it's beautiful,' she answered ; then, turning to him with a laugh, 'D'you know, George, I wouldn't never have owned it, only *you've* said so many times as you wished we'd never left the old place, but I wouldn't go away from here now, not if I was paid to !'

'Well,' said George slowly, with a twinkle in his eye, 'it don't do, you know, to set much account by what a man says when he's put about, and as long as you're content up here I don't know but what I am—except after flood time.'

*A GREAT LANDLORD.*


---

IN the year 1069 a French monk named Benedict, of the monastery of Auxerre, received instructions from St. Germanus, who appeared to him in a vision, bidding him to make his journey into England and found an abbey in his honour at a place named Selby. The vision was thrice repeated before the monk ventured to act upon the warning he had received, and then, fortified with a relic of the saint, he at last made his way to the shores of this country. The land was wholly unknown to him, and it is not wonderful that he should have had some difficulty in finding the obscure spot to which he had been directed. Benedict came, accordingly, to Salisbury, which he found, to his dismay, was not the place he wanted, and, moreover, no one could tell him anything about it. The locality, it appeared, was quite unknown. But St. Germanus was impatient of geographical blunders, and again appeared to rebuke him for his mistake. The mere worldly traveller might lose his way, and pass unreprieved, but better things were expected of the heaven-guided pilgrim. Had not the name of Selby, asked the saint, been clearly and explicitly stated in the very first vision, had it not been thrice repeated? how was it, then, that Benedict had come these many leagues out of the right way? A vision of the place was then vouchsafed to him, and encouraged by this sight he fared forth once more. Doubtless the saint's directions had been positive and clear enough, but the fact remains that Benedict was obliged to ask his way of human counsellors, and we are told that Edward, a pious monk of Salisbury, made him many presents and helped him on his journey. Arrived at Lynn in Norfolk, the pilgrim found a ship bound for York, and as his vessel sailed up the Ouse he recognised the place indicated in his vision. There he disembarked, and having set up a cross, he built a hut under a great oak, and forthwith set about the work with which he was commissioned.

This account of the founding of the abbey of Selby is derived from a chronicle which, in later days, was made in the mother abbey, St. Germanus of Auxerre, concerning its own history. A more prosaic account assigns the foundation of the monastery to William the Conqueror, who thereby marked his gratitude for the success which had attended his conquest of the north of England. The autumn of 1069 had been specially devoted to the reduction of Yorkshire, and when the Conqueror retired to keep his Christmas in state at York, he left utter desolation behind him from the Humber to the Tees. To his new foundation at Selby he gave one carucate<sup>1</sup> of land in Snaith, six oxgangs in Flaxley and Rowcliffe, half a carucate in Braiton, and a fishery at Whitgift. The deed of foundation then proceeds: 'I have also confirmed the grant of Crull, viz., one hundred, which lies in the county of Lincoln, and of Stanford in the county of Northampton, quietly and freely exempt from all taxation, trouble and annoyance, as becomes the alms of a king, and the abbey of his founding in endless and perpetual peace; and to have and possess for ever its own court with sac, soc, tol, team, and infangenethefe.'<sup>2</sup>

From its very foundation, therefore, the abbey of Selby was richly endowed, and in subsequent generations gifts were lavished upon it with no niggard hand. Roger de Mowbray, one of its noble benefactors, assigned to the abbey four fisheries in the Trent; Emma de Lascels gave a mill, which gift her son Adam confirmed 'by hanging a knife on the altar, only reserving the right of having corn ground there for his own use.' The Archbishop of York gave the lands of Fryston and Minor Selby, a gift destined to be of great importance, as the quarries of Fryston furnished most of the excellent stone used in the building of the monastery. The rest of the stone was a gift from the family of Vavasour, always generous in their alms to Holy Church, who bestowed upon the monks the quarry known as the 'Quarel pit.' During the reign of the eighteenth abbot the 'return of Pope Nicholas,' concerning the property of religious houses in England, was made. This was a time when, as Carlyle reminds us, 'the fifth part of our English soil lay consecrated to "spiritual uses" . . . solemnly

<sup>1</sup> A carucate is as much land as a team of oxen can plough in a year, or roughly, 100 acres.

<sup>2</sup> Sac=administration of justice, soc=precinct, tol=right of buying and selling, infangenethefe=right of judging thieves within a manor.

set apart to foster spiritual growth and culture of the soil, by the methods then known, and the income of the monastery of Selby was quoted as £832 11s. 1d., or some £16,000 of our money. The number of brethren at no time exceeded thirty, so that the annual income per head amounted at this time to over £500. The thirteenth century was probably the time of the abbey's greatest prosperity, but even in its infancy it can never have been poor.

The monks of Selby must, from the very outset of their career, have been in the enjoyment of a lordly income, and although the possession of all this wealth withdrew them from the life of devotion to which they were especially vowed, the use they made of their riches was so magnificent that we, at this distant day, can hardly regret the perilous gift which was bestowed on them. It is beyond question that from the very first the duties that devolved upon the head of this rich community, made a life of contemplation quite impossible. Abbot Hugh, the immediate successor of Benedict, was a man of undoubted piety, but the rigours and joys of the contemplative life were never allowed to enchain him. In his days the wooden structure by the river bank, where Benedict had planted his cross, was demolished, and a new site was chosen, and the Norman building which remains in great part to this day was begun. The nave, as it now stands, was the work of Abbot Hugh; but not only did this excellent monk design and plan his church on paper, he also laboured side by side with his masons and carpenters, superintending every detail of the work, and executing his share with his own hands. In fact, there was nothing to distinguish him from the humblest of his workmen—he wore the same clothes, and received the same wages, the only difference being that on Saturday the hired workmen put their money in their pockets, while the abbot's wages were distributed to the poor. This story seems to imply that the main part of the work was done by hired labourers, but it is very unlikely that while the abbot set such an example of enthusiasm, the brethren were content to remain idle. Probably every able-bodied man among them contributed his quota to the work; but the number of the brethren was small, never more than thirty, and as the whole of the great nave, with its stupendous piers and lofty arches, was raised in some sixty years, it is obvious that a work of such magnitude could not have been completed by the

brethren alone, and in their short intervals of leisure between the canonical hours.

The third abbot came to Selby from the monastery of St. Albans, a house famous for its great scriptorium and for the treasures of its library. Abbot Hubertus was a worthy son of this learned house ; ' he was ever the first at prayers and the last to leave ' ; he loved leisure, devotion and study, but alas ! these good things were not to be had at Selby, or at least they were denied to the careworn Father who had to direct this great estate. During the slack rule of the devout Hubertus the revenues of Selby suffered diminution, rents and tithes were ungathered, and accounts remained unkept. This was a state of things by no means to be tolerated, and after four years of ineffectual struggle with unruly temporalities, the good man took his journey south again, and bestowed himself with a thankful heart in the retired leisure from which he had so unwisely ventured forth. But spiritual genius is after all a plant of rarer growth than practical common sense, and we never hear that the brethren of Selby were troubled again with an abbot who was too good for his work. Indeed, after the retirement of Hubertus, they had some difficulty in finding a man of even average good character ; his successor presided ably at the receipt of custom, but his life was a scandal to the community, and he was compelled to resign by Archbishop Thurstan. One other abbot there was of notorious wickedness, but the rest seem to have lived piously, and to have discharged the duties of their office with zeal and ability. No saint or student was bred among them, but many rose up who were distinguished at court, in law and in politics. The Abbot of Selby was *ex officio* a peer of the realm, and abbots who had political leanings found that their parliamentary duties gave them plenty to do. Prior Roger de Ludon, who became abbot in 1189, was an active politician, and died whilst attending an assize at York. Abbot John de Wistowe was summoned to London to attend no fewer than nine parliaments, a work of considerable labour, if we realise what difficulties were then involved in a journey from Selby to the south. Evidently there were some abbots who would not undergo the perils of the way for any consideration, for we find from the account rolls that Abbot Pygot paid twenty shillings ' to the clerk of parliament for his diligence in excusing the lord abbot for not coming to the same.'

Prowess in arms was not considered inconsistent with the sacred office of abbot; on the contrary, in the stormy days of the early Plantagenets, an abbot who had enjoyed a military training was a positive blessing to his house. Such was Helias Pagnanellus, son of the first Baron of Drax, who withstood the Lacies in their attempt to build a castle at Selby to overawe both town and monks. In the following century we find another man of war, Simon de Scardeburgh, who became abbot in 1313. In his time occurred the disastrous battle with the Scots at Myton on Swale. This encounter was known as the 'White Battle,' from the number of ecclesiastics who took part in it, and according to Holinshed, the Abbot of Selby was "one of those who escaped from the battle with the helpe of their swifte horses."

The dignity of the law was represented by Ralph de Selby, who became a councillor to King Richard II., and was honoured with a tomb in Westminster Abbey. Henry de Snayth, a monk of Selby, who was also prebend of York, Beverley, Lincoln and Howden, was appointed clerk of the Great Wardrobe to Edward III., and seems to have prospered in his day. The founder's rules concerning the holding of private property by monks must have been leniently interpreted at this time, for Henry de Snayth left large sums of money by will as well as sundry valuable articles of apparel. Towards the 'restoration' of Selby Abbey, which means probably the building of the choir, he left £66 13s. 4d.; £40 for a priest's house at Snayth; £3 6s. 8d. to the abbot; 6s. 8d. to the prior; and 3s. 4d. to each of the monks. To the abbot he also bequeathed the reversion of his 'blue satyn garment embroidered with suns,' after the death of the Bishop of Lincoln, who was to wear it as long as he lived.

The only materials from which we can form any idea of the life of the community during the latter part of its history are the account rolls of the abbey. During the abbacy of William Pygot, who was appointed in 1407, and his successor Abbot John Cave, 1429, these accounts were kept with such a wealth of quaint particularity, that we are enabled to infer with some exactness what were the daily occupations of the brethren, and how stately and pompous was the life of my Lord Abbot. It is not too much to say that by this time the religious life of the monks of Selby had come

to be largely a matter of routine ; their great building labours were over, they had never been students at any time, and, indeed, they never possessed more than one book, a small treatise on horticulture—rather a thing in book's clothing than a book. Their early enthusiasms had all died away, and they seem to have settled down to a dull and somewhat idle life, diversified only by such amusements as they could devise for themselves, whenever a festival furnished them with an excuse for merrymaking. No one who sees the frequent disbursements for game, poultry, venison, and fruit can doubt that the brethren fared tolerably well at all times, fast days included, for we find an entry for 'zod. for oysters given to the convent on Ash Wednesday.' Great festivals were kept with due observance, at least, so far as the honours of the table were concerned. 'John Sterke, of Thorne, bringing a boar to the Lord Abbot on Christmas Eve' received three and fourpence ; 'a servant of the Prior of Drax bringing to the Lord Abbot at the same time apples, pears, and cheese,' was rewarded with fourpence for his trouble, while the players before the Lord Abbot on Christmas Day were paid twelve pence, and to the 'king of the kitchen boys' was given eightpence by order of the Lord Abbot ('*ad carniprifium*'). It is interesting to notice that in these transactions there is no mere vulgar trafficking ; the various dainties which are left at the abbey gate are regarded as the offerings due to my Lord Abbot at this festive season from his grateful tenantry, and the sums paid for them, though they clearly bear some relation to the value of the articles, are not looked upon as market prices, but as gratuities to the bearers. Abbot Cave was evidently a lover of good music, for besides the above-mentioned sum given to the Christmas 'players' we find a further entry of six-and-eightpence to 'four minstrels of the Earl of Northumberland after the Feast of the Purification.' At the same festival Sir Robert Babthorpe 'bringing a porpoise to the Lord Abbot' received twelpence. Apparently the alms of the faithful were sometimes more curious than toothsome, but perhaps in days when roasted swans and castles of pastry were the usual adornments of the festive board, a porpoise may have been no more than a welcome novelty. By far the greater number of entries are for articles of daily consumption ; though it is clear that the duties of friendship were not neglected, frequent entries occur of small sums given to certain persons



'as a mark of affection,' and my Lord Abbot has also the dignity of his own station to support in becoming fashion by presents to his peers, the great lords spiritual and temporal of the district. The large sum of twenty-four shillings is entered on account of 'six cygnets, bought of William Glover and given to the Lord Dean of York for his residence.' The sums spent at Selby in distribution to the poor do not compare favourably in amount with the disbursements of other great monastic houses, such as St. Edmundsbury for example, but this, from a Charity Organisation point of view, may be rather a glory than a reproach. The abbot's Christmas charities on one occasion are entered as fifty-six shillings, a sufficient sum one would think for the little town of Selby, though small enough when compared with other expenses; the fees of the abbot's personal attendants, for instance, amounted at the same date to a hundred and thirty-one shillings. The accounts for these years contain one item which we may hope was often repeated, viz., payments made on behalf of a certain 'brother Robert Duffield' for books, boots, and expenses at Oxford, which last were all covered by the modest sum of three-and-fourpence. We have no direct evidence beyond these three entries that the abbey was accustomed to maintain poor scholars at the universities; yet the large number of Selby men who won distinctions in after life makes it very probable that they owed their early training in letters to the monastery school of their native town, and were possibly indebted to the same source for the means which furnished them with a University education. The liberal bequests of Henry de Snayth to the abbey seem to indicate a grateful remembrance of benefits received at its hands.

After all, however, the special bit of the world's work that was apportioned to Selby was that of the squire not of the schoolmaster; and whatever their shortcomings in other directions may have been, there can be no doubt that in their own peculiar sphere the monks of Selby acquitted themselves nobly. A great scheme, which would reflect credit on the ablest engineers of our own engineering age, was conceived and carried out in the remote fourteenth century, and that in spite of much opposition from the ignorance and prejudice of contemporaries. About the year 1350 a great marsh, six hundred acres in extent, known as Inclesmere, which had long poisoned the whole district with its malarial effluvia was

drained and reclaimed by Abbot Gilfred de Gatesby. The 'late Abbot of Selby did cause a strong sluice of wood to be made upon the river Trent, at the head of a certain sewer called Maredike, of a sufficient height and breadth for the defence of the tides coming from the sea, and likewise from the fresh waters descending from the west part of the before-specified sluice to the said sewer, into the river Trent and thence into the Humber.' After Gilfred's death his work was destroyed by malicious hands, and his successor, John de Shireburn, 'made new the same sluices,' but his work was not strong enough, and a third re-building was necessary before the marsh was finally reclaimed. The tomb of Abbot John de Shireburn is the earliest sepulchral monument now remaining in the abbey.

Like their celebrated successor, the architect of St. Paul's, the builders of Selby have no need of monuments to mark their memory, for every stone of the holy and beautiful house which they erected is eloquent of their praise. The entire length of the church from west doorway to lady chapel is 300 feet, and as one enters the whole long vista stretches unbroken before the eye until it culminates in the magnificent east window, which Pugin called the most beautiful in England. The wonderful lines of the flowing tracery with which the head of the window is filled form a pattern upon which the eye may rest with loving satisfaction. It is sufficiently intricate to exclude that sense of poverty which is inseparable from geometrical designs, for the mind has an ample task in following out its curves and ramifications, while at the same time the whole effect is one of restful and gracious harmony. The flamboyant window of the Flemings' chapel at St. Mary's, Beverley, somewhat resembles it, but all comparison is excluded by the want of size of the Flemings' window. The whole space at Selby with its seven lights and glorious tracery is filled with glass as exquisite in colour as the window is graceful in design. A large portion of this glass is ancient, and the newer part harmonises as closely with the old as one can reasonably hope or expect. The old glass is of the best English period, without any hint of Flemish influence, and so combines its hues of piercing brilliancy into one soft harmony that the rich oriental carpet on the sanctuary steps beneath it seems but a dull, earthly reflection of its splendour.

'The choir of Selby,' says Sir Gilbert Scott, 'is in the finest

decorated or middle-pointed style, and of the most perfect design and execution.' It would, indeed, be strange to find it otherwise, for the middle of the fourteenth century was an epoch of great church building, and all over Yorkshire magnificent fabrics were springing into existence. At Howden, only five miles from Selby, the nave of a great church was already completed, and the nave and west front of York Minster had just been finished. 'As soon as the monks of Selby had money enough they were to build the new choir,' wrote the Archbishop of York, and it seems not unlikely that the skilled workmen who had been employed at York may have come to take part in the new work which was about to be commenced at Selby. The most striking feature of the choir is its length; it appears to have the same extension as the great Norman nave, and as a matter of fact its seven bays cover 142 feet, or two feet more than the eight bays of the nave. Notwithstanding the elaborate moulding of the arches and the rich foliage of the capitals, the whole effect of the choir is simple and restrained. The one fantastic feature is the introduction of grotesque seated figures on the open parapet that protects the clerestory passage. These figures are repeated on the exterior battlement of the choir, and similar figures are found at York and Beverley.

The nave has single circular columns and clustered piers alternately, the two eastern bays are the work of Abbot Hugh, and belong to the early Norman period, while the third and fourth, though still Norman, differ in some respects from the earlier work and probably mark the first extension of the nave about 1140; the four remaining bays are distinctly transitional. The north side of the triforium belongs to the same period and is a most interesting piece of work. It has large semicircular arches on three orders of columns alternately with clusters round a central drum. On the south side, which is of the Early English period, the space within the enclosing round arch is subdivided into two pointed arches with circles and trefoils in the head, while curious disengaged shafts pass up between each of the pointed arches through the clerestory, and terminate in the caps which support the ceiling. Other points of interest are the rich Norman doorways on the west and north, the exquisite diaper work of the altar screen, and the arcade of the south choir aisle which recalls St. Hugh's work at Lincoln; but the chief attraction of Selby lies in the fact that it is the

only great Benedictine monastery in the north of England whose church still remains intact. At Bolton, Bridlington, and Old Malton the naves of ancient priories have been restored and now serve as parish churches, while their ruined choirs stand bare and roofless; but at Selby we have the only monastic church throughout the three ridings of York where nave, choir, and transepts have escaped alike from the ravages of time and the wanton hand of the destroyer.

---

*OFF THE HIGH ROAD:*

THE STORY OF A SUMMER.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE, AUTHOR OF 'IN THE LION'S MOUTH,'  
'YOUNG DENYS,' 'MISS LATIMER OF BRYANS,' ETC.

---

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LAST DAY BUT ONE.

'A murderous guilt shows not itself more soon  
Than love that would seem hid ; love's night is noon.'

'LOOK here, Mrs. Firkins,' said Locke mysteriously.

He had been to Tarringford, shopping for the household, and now, having deposited his parcels, he took a folded paper from an inner pocket and spread it on the table in the house-keeper's room.

'Just you read that,' he said.

Firkins put on her spectacles, but they were hardly necessary. The reward of One Thousand Pounds was offered in letters large enough for a blind person to see. It was for immediate information of the whereabouts of the young lady, the Hon. Viola Fairfax, who had spent the summer, under the name of Field, at the Old Slang Farm. As before, the information was to be sent to Messrs. Sharpe and Keane, in the Strand.

'It's a regular excitement in Tarringford,' said Locke. 'These bills are about everywhere. On the road too, the gate-posts and the walls covered with 'em. I declare, they made me feel quite queer.'

'Oh, they're nothing new,' said Firkins scornfully. 'Days ago I heard gardener talking about them. These guardians are getting into a fuss, and naturally, for she'll be of age in a few days, and that half-million slips out of their clutches. However, I believe they've given up the notion of finding her about here. Wasn't it you as told me that Mr. Marston had gone back to London ?'

'I believe he has,' said Locke. He stood, looking thoughtfully down upon the outspread paper. 'It's a good thing, Mrs. Firkins, as the Colonel has faithful servants like you and me,' he added after a minute. 'Though it ain't so much credit to you, I must say, as you're attached to Miss Fairfax for old sake's sake, and no doubt she'll show her gratitude. But as for me and cook and Sarah, I don't quite see what advantage we're to get out of it.'

'I expect we shall none of us have cause to repent, if you ask me,' replied Firkins. 'Take my word for it, there's something in the wind that'll be good for us all. Mind you, though, I ain't sure that he deserves it.'

'Oh, well, he's a good young feller,' said Locke smiling. 'A bit uneducated, though, for the likes of her. So you're sure of that, are you? Well, it would be a fine thing for Stepford, I daresay. But I doubt if any of us servants would make a thousand pound out of it.'

'It's easy to make a fortune if you're dishonest enough to begin with,' said Firkins a little drily. 'But the girls are good girls, and it ain't you nor I that'll put things into their heads.'

So saying Firkins crumbled up the bill in both hands and threw it behind the fire. Locke laughed as he watched it burning.

The thirtieth of August had come, and all was very quiet about Stepford. All these days had been terribly trying for Edwin, and his father began to perceive that the ordeal was almost too great for him. His silence sometimes was like moroseness; he would sit for hours without speaking when it was not necessary to talk to their guest; but yet it was plain that his eyes and every sense were occupied with her. Sometimes she tried, in the earlier days especially, to rouse him from these fits of silent melancholy; but her failures were frequently such as to affect her own spirits and even to hurt her pride. She would turn away, flushing a little, and devote herself to the Colonel, whose manuscript did not advance much in these days. He would try to amuse her with old soldier tales, which she enjoyed heartily at first. But at the smallest sign of life or interest from Edwin she would turn to him so readily, so brightly, that the Colonel himself wondered at her. Was it all pity and kindness on her part towards the young fellow, whose sadness was almost unmannerly? Was it possible that the cause of that sadness was not hidden from her? This the

Colonel did not believe ; at least, if it was so, the reason must be found in some second-sight of her own. He felt quite secure in Edwin's loyalty. But for his son's sake he was glad to think that the days were passing, and that the heiress's twenty-first birthday was close at hand.

Edwin, too, supposed himself to be longing for that day, while in reality he was dreading it, and thinking of it as nothing less than a plunge into utter darkness. It seemed that one could not be quite miserable while Viola was still there.

The evening of the thirtieth of August was cloudy and oppressive. All day it had been the same weather, and there was hardly a breath of fresh air in the great walled garden, when Edwin and Viola, attended by Don, went out between six and seven o'clock and walked up and down there.

Viola had told Edwin and his father that she would leave them on the 2nd of September, so that there were still two days for her to spend at the Hall. She was not afraid now of discovery ; it seemed as if the idea of finding her in this neighbourhood had been quite given up ; for the last few days no spying strangers had been seen about Stepford. Her plan was to go straight away to the old aunt in Jersey who was almost her only living relation, and to stay with her till something further could be arranged. She had been talking over her route with Colonel Dampier, and trying to persuade him that a person of her experience could very well travel alone. This idea did not at all please him, or Edwin either, but they did not know what companion to suggest. Firkins seemed the only person at all possible, and she would certainly have frightened away any too forward fellow-travellers. But Viola laughed and declared that she really could not deprive them of Firkins.

'I should myself be more of a burden than an assistance to you,' said Colonel Dampier. 'Edwin—well, he must not start on another journey at present.'

She glanced at Edwin, who sat slouched and looking on the floor. Perhaps she thought his father a tiresome old man.

At first, in the garden, he was very silent as he paced by her side down the long, straight path. She asked him if he would do something for her.

'Of course I will,' he said.

She wanted him to pay the £700 to Mr. Arnold for old Harry Holt, and to give the old man a kind message from her

about it. He should have the cheque in a few days, she said; and she went on talking of Harry and saying how she owed him much more than that, for certainly, if it had not been for his quickness, she might not have been able to baffle her pursuers so successfully.

‘Yes, we all owe Harry something,’ said Edwin. ‘My father would not approve of your doing this, I think. But you ought to do what you like.’

‘Yes, everything I like. I am glad you think so. And so I may travel alone?’

‘No—we must draw the line there. But I’ve thought of somebody.’

‘Who?’

‘Jessie Downes.’

‘How very clever of you!’

Viola was delighted. Of course she must say goodbye to Mrs. Downes and Jessie—and poor Jessie certainly deserved some comfort and joy after this painful fortnight; besides, her engagement being broken off, nothing could be better for her than to go away for a time.

‘But can Mrs. Downes do without her? will she let her go?’

‘Oh yes, she must. I’ll settle it with Mrs. Downes. I’ll go down to-night after dinner and put Jessie out of her misery about you, and settle the whole thing. As I can’t go myself, Jessie is the next person to be trusted.’

Viola laughed gently and looked pleased.

‘What will you do,’ she said, ‘after I am gone?’

‘What a question!’

‘I meant,’ she said, ‘have you any particular business to do for your father—anything on the estate?’

‘Nothing that I know of,’ he answered, and she smiled again at the hopeless desolation in his voice. ‘The same old life that you found me in, the same wood of briars—do you remember?—only with the stupid old content gone out of it.’

‘Don’t talk in those silly parables,” she said very gently. ‘I wish—I wish I could make things brighter for you, but you must try to be good——’

It was almost too much for Edwin; he turned half round, catching his breath, and said quickly, ‘I am trying to be good! If you knew how hard, you would not——’

‘I would not——’ repeated Viola, softly.



He laughed with a sudden impatience and anger at himself, and did not finish his sentence.

'Some day, if I want something to do very badly,' he said, 'you might give me a small agency somewhere. I understand about land and all that, as you know, and I would do my best to manage your tenants properly.'

'Do you really mean that?'

He was silent for a minute; then he said, 'No, I don't suppose I do.'

'I will give you nothing of the kind. I will have a stranger for my agent, not a friend. By and by, when I am settled at Northley and everything is at peace, I hope you and Colonel Dampier will come and pay me a long visit there. I will ask some nice people to meet you.'

'Thank you. But my father never leaves home, so I am afraid——'

'But you will come? If Colonel Dampier can spare you to go abroad he can spare you to come and see me.'

'I think I would rather not, thank you,' said Edwin doggedly.

It was Viola's turn to be silent. She tried to look grave, even offended, though a smile would force its way, and her eyes, it must be confessed, were dancing with mischief. But Edwin dared not look at her.

'You should not answer me so unkindly,' she said after a pause. 'It is more civil to try and hide your—dislikings—a little. I am sorry—well, at least I may think of Colonel Dampier as a friend, and I shall write to him sometimes.'

Edwin stalked along staring on the ground.

'You must do everything you please,' he muttered, 'and therefore you must be as unjust as you please.'

'Am I unjust? Are you as nice and friendly as you were that first day, when we went up Stepford Hill—or that day when you rowed me down to Tarringford? I am just the same as I was then, but you—if I did not know better—I should say you did not like having me here—found me rather a plague than otherwise.'

'If you did not know better!' Edwin repeated. 'But as you do know better—as you do know everything that—never can be told you—why do you make it worse by tormenting me? How can you talk of dislike, when—when——'

'I'm very sorry—I had no idea of tormenting you. I know

how good you are, so forgive me—I daresay I am very wrong—so let us talk of something else.'

'Let me tell you one thing,' said Edwin. 'You are quite right that I was a different person when I first saw you—before I went abroad. But you must remember that I did not really know you then.'

She could not help laughing, though a little uncertainly.

'And the present state of things is the result of further acquaintance? You are really very odd, and almost too candid.'

'When I was in London, where I went for two days on business for my father, hoping for nothing better than to get back quickly, I accidentally came to know things about you—'

'Against me?'

'No,' he said, almost violently. 'Against myself. I went abroad with a fellow who asked me—because I did not dare to come home. Do you understand me *now* ?'

Viola was silent; they walked the whole length of the path, side by side, without speaking, and the dark autumn evening was beginning to close in.

'Do you?' he said under his breath.

'Yes—I did know something. I can only say I am sorry—'

'Of course,' he said drearily—'and that is very kind of you. Now I have been cowardly, and have failed after all, for I meant to tell you nothing.'

'I was going to say,' said Viola very gently, 'that I was sorry you should have been unhappy. And don't reproach yourself. You have told me very little that I did not know or suspect, and nothing that is not—most honourable to you. And it was my fault that you said anything. So don't reproach yourself, and forgive me, and believe that I *do* understand.'

Edwin stammered something irrational.

'No—be good,' she said. 'Only—don't seem so unhappy.'

What might have happened after that nobody knows, but Colonel Dampier had become a little anxious at their being in the garden longer than usual, and now appeared at the far end of the walk. The sun had set without a gleam, and twilight was advancing. He looked sharply at their faces, but only saw that Edwin was a little flushed and Viola smiling more sweetly than usual. She began at once to tell him of Edwin's idea

that Jessie Downes might be her travelling companion, and he approved cordially. Edwin, through dinner, was as silent as usual and a little dazed, so that all the talk was carried on between Colonel Dampier and their young guest, but that was nothing new.

Not long after dinner Edwin took his hat and started for the farm, leaving his father and Viola in the library, now civilised by the presence of another armchair and one or two small tables. Don also remained at home: in these days he considered himself Viola's special guardian, and would hardly ever leave her, even for a walk with his master.

It was now very dark: but Edwin knew his own old precincts as well by night as by day. He went down the garden and out by the door into the hollow lane. Where it ran between the garden wall and the railings which defended the steep, overgrown bank to the river there was a grey glimmer of western sky; but beyond this, with the high field bank to the right, and the tall dark spinney to the left, there was a solid blackness in which one could see nothing.

In that narrow road, however, there was no danger of losing the way. Edwin was almost through the darkest part, approaching the stile that led into the field, when he was recalled from thoughts that wandered vaguely among incredible things by a moving shadow against the lesser density in front, where spinney and banks opened to a broad horizon. Almost at the same moment he was aware of whispering voices and cautious footsteps near the stile. The voices ceased as he came nearer; the footsteps advanced slowly till Edwin was on a level with a man, whose companion hung behind a little.

'Good-night,' said Edwin.

'Good-night, sir,' replied the first shadow.

There was something in the voice, as well as in the shape of the man's head and shoulders against the dim background, which seemed oddly familiar.

'Why, Locke, is that you?' said Edwin. 'What are you doing out here?'

'I've just been to the farm with a message, sir.'

'Well, make haste back. You and I ought not to be out together. Who is that with you?'

'It—it's Smith, sir, from Allington—going home from Tarringford.'

'A dark night for a long walk, Smith. Good-night.'

The other man replied by a hoarse grunt, and it flashed across Edwin's mind that Smith was not a very steady fellow, and might have had a little too much before he left Tarringford. Not a first-rate companion for Locke, he thought. He never cordially liked or trusted Locke, though he had no reason to the contrary.

When he was gone the two men still lingered there in the darkness.

'Tell me again,' whispered the man called Smith, between his teeth. 'Always together for the last fortnight?'

'Yes, sir. And the housekeeper, she seemed to think it was a settled thing. But I'm bound to say I've seen no exact signs of that.'

'All right, Locke. You have your packet. The rest when she is safe in our hands—to-morrow night, probably. Now go home.'

'You can find your way back to the road, sir?'

'Perfectly.'

The men parted, disappearing different ways into the darkness.

'Now, if I could have my own way,' reflected Locke, 'I'd make tracks this very night. However, it's no use turning tail in the middle. I must go back and face them, though I don't half like it. Yet I can't see as I've done anything wrong—no, that I can't.'

Edwin's visit to the farm was not a long one, considering all that he had to do—to rejoice Mrs. Downes' heart by explaining the whole affair to Jessie and setting her mind at rest about Viola, and then to arrange with Jessie for the journey to the Channel Islands in two days' time. At the first moment Jessie caught eagerly at the idea, then she said she could not leave her mother, but Mrs. Downes laughed her to scorn.

'Hezekiah is twice as obliging when you're not here,' she said. 'And Mr. Edwin will come and see me, and we'll comfort each other.'

But while she said this she looked at Mr. Edwin a little curiously. She knew her young squire so well, and loved him so dearly, that each change of mood was very plain to her. No, she could not be mistaken. He was no longer in those depths of hopelessness which had held him ever since he came home. He was still troubled, anxious, grave; but he could smile in his old way; and he would have gone on for a long

time satisfying Jessie's curiosity as to how they managed for her young lady at the Hall, if the clock had not startled him by striking half-past nine. He started up, wished them good-night hastily, and stepped out into the darkness.

'Won't you have a lantern, Mr. Edwin?' Jessie called after him from the door.

'No, I'm all right, thanks.'

'Well, mother,' said Jessie, turning back into the kitchen, where her mother sat smiling over pleasant fancies by the fire, 'I never could have believed you'd have kept a secret like that from me all these days.'

'No more could I, Jessie. But the Colonel insisted upon it. You see, my dear, at that time, we were all a bit afraid of Joseph.'

'You needn't have been.'

'And, my dear, it was uncommon hard for me to believe that you had kept certain things from me all the long summer.'

'I should have been a lot happier if you had known all, but Missy was so nervous. Yes, I see, we've got to forgive each other. Well now, about this journey.'

'Ah! you won't dislike a change from these parts, Jessie.'

'As to that, I don't care,' the girl murmured; and as the firelight danced upon her face Mrs. Downes thought sorrowfully how pale and thin she had grown in the last fortnight. Was it only anxiety for Viola? She sincerely hoped so.

The walk home was still darker than the walk there had been. When Edwin had crossed the stile he faced a wall of blackness, deepened by the tall fir-trees of the spinney and the high banks, and then the garden wall closing the vista. He was obliged to guide himself with his stick by the palings of the spinney.

Suddenly, in advance of him, and apparently among the trees, he heard a rustling, then the click of a revolver. At the same moment he felt something like a violent, stunning blow on his left shoulder, instantly followed by sickening pain. The shock was so great that he dropped on one knee, but instantly rose again and tried to climb the palings in the direction of the sound. He had not uttered a cry when the bullet struck him, but now he shouted, 'I'm coming, you scoundrel! You have not done for me this time!'

He was answered by the discharge of another barrel, but

this time the bullet missed him. He was no longer such a sure mark as against the fainter darkness whence he had come.

‘All right! I’m coming!’ he shouted again; and then, as he struggled vainly either to get over the fence or to break it down, his left arm hanging useless by his side, he heard the assailant running away through the rustling dead leaves of the little wood.

He stood still for a moment, leaning on the fence, then started to walk home. How he got there he did not know, or how he rang the bell at the front door. Locke opened it. He turned as white as Edwin himself, for his young master staggered past him without a word, and fell down insensible, streaming with blood, on the pavement of the hall.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE LAST DAY.

‘For I say nought that she so sodeynly  
Yaf hym hire love, but that she gan encline  
To like hym firste, and I have told you why;  
And efter that, his manhod and his pyne  
Made love withinne hire hertē for to myne;  
For which by proces, and by goode servyse,  
He got hire love, and in no sodeyn wyse.’

WHEN Edwin came to himself, he was lying on the broad old leathern couch in the hall, his shoulder roughly bandaged, and the bleeding stopped for the present. The hall seemed very dark; it was never well lighted; and the silence was so deep that he thought he was alone. It was a minute or two before he remembered everything; and then he tried suddenly to move, to sit up, but fell back with an exclamation of pain. Then he knew that he was not alone, for Viola had crossed the hall, and was standing beside him.

‘Don’t move; lie as still as you can,’ she said. ‘The doctor will be here very soon: in the meantime you must do as I tell you.’

‘What has happened to me?’ murmured Edwin. ‘Some fellow shot me. Am I badly hurt?’

'We hope not. Your father thinks your collar-bone is broken. He has bandaged you up very cleverly, and Locke has ridden off to Tarringford for Dr. Lewis. You must keep quite still till he comes.'

'Locke? Why, Locke——'

Somehow the mystery of the matter loomed very strangely in Edwin's mind through all his pain and weakness. He looked up imploringly at the girl as she bent over him.

'Where is Locke?' he said.

'I tell you, he has gone to fetch the doctor,' she repeated, trying to smile.

'Oh! but there's something very wrong. A whole set of villains—one can't trust any of them. Somehow I didn't believe it was Smith at the time. I let him pass in the dark, stupid fool! What is the meaning of it all? I must get up—I must——'

'No, no, you must lie still and not fancy things,' said Viola earnestly.

She came a little nearer, and laid her cool fingers lightly on his forehead; she thought he was already wandering, feverish from the wound. He let his eyes close and lay still for a minute, then said very low, 'It would be jolly to die now.' She did not take her hand away, and he could hardly see her face in the twilight. After a few moments he put up his right hand, took hers gently, and held it against his lips; and still she did not draw it back from him.

'Do you know what you are doing?' he murmured at last. 'That you are making everything impossible for me!'

'Hush—hush, poor boy!' whispered Viola.

Then she did very softly draw her hand away, for Colonel Dampier was coming downstairs; he had left her in charge for a few minutes, and had gone to see that all was ready in Edwin's room, thus showing his indignation with Firkins, who had done nothing but scream when Locke first called her into the hall.

The mysterious events of that evening were not yet ended. Dr. Lewis came as quickly as possible, but the hours went by and Locke did not reappear. Nobody knew what to think of this, and by the doctor's orders they did not tell Edwin. His collar-bone was badly broken, and the revolver bullet had made a deep flesh wound, narrowly missing the artery. He was weak from pain and loss of blood, and a little feverish, but

the doctor spoke very cheerfully : he was a clever young man, lately come to Tarringford ; and perhaps he found some satisfaction in gaining admittance so soon to Stepford Hall, ogre's castle as Tarringford generally thought it. By Colonel Dampier's orders Viola kept out of the doctor's way, though she laughed a little at the precaution. She felt so safe now, with only one more day of minority. And she was unaccountably happy. She was to be heard singing to herself in her own room, after Firkins brought her the doctor's favourable report.

The next day came, and no news of Locke, except that a stable-boy from the inn at Tarringford brought Colonel Dampier's mare home, and said Mr. Locke had left her the night before, with orders to send her over in the morning. It was now impossible to hide Locke's absence from Edwin, who asked for him several times ; and Colonel Dampier was so much impressed by the strangeness of his son's adventure the night before, especially as Firkins denied having sent any message to the farm, and Mrs. Downes declared that Locke had never been there, that he telegraphed with Edwin's approval to George Goodenough, asking him, if possible, to come down at once to Stepford.

Edwin was much better that morning. He had slept, and was no longer feverish ; his wound was going on as well as possible, and Dr. Lewis, who arrived early, told him he would not be a prisoner very long.

'Can I get up by and by ?' said Edwin.

'By and by ! In a few days, I suppose you mean ? For the present you will keep perfectly still,' said Dr. Lewis. 'Why, what do you want to get up for ? You have had a near shave of being killed, you know. A little lower down or a little further in, and you could not have given much account of yourself, let me tell you. So be thankful, and keep quiet.'

'Would it kill me to get up ?' asked Edwin.

'Don't talk nonsense,' said the doctor.

In the course of the morning Mrs. Downes and Jessie came up to the Hall, and Mrs. Downes sat with Edwin for an hour or two, while Jessie and Viola, in another room, talked over all that had happened since the eventful day of Stepford Feast. Jessie was very sad, and Mrs. Downes divided between joy and trouble, when at last they walked home together. Perhaps Mrs. Downes was allowing herself unjustified dreams of the



future. But she held her peace ; and there was quite enough to talk about, while keeping a discreet silence on the most interesting subject of all.

Who had fired that shot ? Nobody quite knew what to think or what to say. If Locke, owing to his own strange conduct, was for a moment suspected, he was cleared by Firkins's declaration that he was in the servants' hall at a quarter past nine, and did not go out again before Edwin came in, whereas Edwin himself, as well as Mrs. Downes and Jessie, knew that he had not left the farm till half-past nine.

As to Locke's companion in the dark lane, one thing was soon known : he was not Smith of Allington. A messenger sent over to inquire found that Smith had spent the evening in his own village, comfortably seated in the bar of the 'Jolly Ploughman.' Who, then, was that other man on whom suspicion was thrown so strongly by Locke's false account of him, and then by his disappearance ?

The whole neighbourhood was in a state of excitement. By that afternoon of August 31st the news had spread all round the country. Carriages came driving up to Stepford Hall, bringing distant and half-forgotten neighbours to ask for Edwin Dampier ; the poor people of the district crowded the back premises, for now that the young squire lay helpless they discovered how much they loved him, one and all.

Among these inquiring neighbours one of the foremost was old Harry Holt. He came early in the morning and again towards evening, and this time he begged so hard to see the Colonel that Firkins ventured to take him to the library. She knew that her master was there alone, Miss Fairfax being in her own room, and Edwin asleep. Firkins and the Colonel, faithful nurses, if stern, had been in and out of his room all the afternoon. It had not entered into the Colonel's old-fashioned ideas to ask Viola to visit the wounded man ; in fact, he most heartily wished her out of the house altogether. Edwin did not venture to ask for her, and she, whatever she may have wished, held her tongue. Certainly the Colonel was not encouraging ; for when she suggested to him that it might be more convenient for her to put off her journey a few days he said that he saw no reason for that. Of course he recognised her kindness ; but he was too well aware of the discomfort of the house to wish her to stay in it longer than necessary, and he understood that Miss Downes's company was quite at her

service. He spoke stiffly, though politely, and for once Miss Fairfax felt herself silenced. She was even a little hurt, feeling that Colonel Dampier ought to understand her better than this after a fortnight's acquaintance, and in this time of trouble and mystery ought at least to treat her as a deeply interested friend.

'Well, Holt, what's the matter? I have no time to spare,' said the Colonel impatiently, when Firkins brought the old man in.

It did not appear to Harry that his landlord was doing anything at all, except marching up and down the room with strained anxiety in every glance and movement. But he answered respectfully.

'Sorry to interrupt you, sir, but it's about Mr. Edwin.'

'Do you want to know how he is? The servants could have told you. We are overwhelmed with questions. It shows the amazing peacefulness of this country—this absurd excitement caused by a single shot. Compulsory military service, I have always thought, would be the best thing possible for England.'

'Well, thank Heaven, we ain't come to that yet,' said Harry piously; and certainly he and the Colonel, as they stood looking at each other, might have been drawn as personifications of War and Peace. 'I'm not a fighting-man by no means,' he said. 'But it pleases me to see the wicked brought to judgment. It isn't questions I am come to ask, Colonel. I wouldn't have intruded for that, as Mr. Edwin could tell you. I've got a pretty fair idea who it may have been as shot Mr. Edwin. I don't say who it *was*, mind you. One little question, though—I've asked nobody else, and you won't tell me unless you choose. That young lady has been here in this house since the Feast, if I ain't mistaken?'

'That has nothing to do with the matter. Give me your information,' said Colonel Dampier fiercely. He walked to his desk, spread out a sheet of paper, and took a pen.

'Nay, don't you go writing it down,' said Harry. 'Just listen first—and as to my little question, we'll take it as answered. It's borne in on me that in this world there's only one man who has a spite against Mr. Edwin.'

'And who is that?'

'The gentleman as was round here sticking bills and offering rewards. I think they call him Mr. Marston.'

'Why should he have a special spite against Mr. Edwin?'

'Well, sir, I may be wrong.'

Harry proceeded to give the Colonel a vivid account of the scene at the garden door, with a startling description of Mr. Marston and the way he looked at Edwin, and the things he said to him. The Colonel's pale face reddened.

'The man is a scamp,' he said. 'But what is the use of telling me all this. He is not here now. I don't see——'

'Begging your pardon, Colonel, he was here last night,' said Harry, low and confidentially.

'How do you know that?'

It then appeared that Harry had that morning met Hezekiah Gibbs, who confided to him that last night, between half-past nine and ten, he had been on his way to see after a sick cow, when in the field way between the Slang and the road he met a man in a great hurry. Having a lantern, he held it up and had a good look at Mr. Augustus Marston, whom he had seen several times before. The gentleman did not speak, but slunk by in the darkness; he probably did not know that he was recognised by the old bent labourer with his dim farming lantern. When the news of Mr. Edwin's accident reached the farm next morning Hezekiah thought very solemnly of this meeting; but he had not mentioned it till Mr. Holt expressed his wonder as to what bad characters could be prowling unseen about Stepford Hall.

'He did not tell Mrs. Downes?' said Colonel Dampier.

'Nor Miss Downes neither,' replied Harry. 'Hezekiah's one as keeps his tongue between his teeth. And he don't believe in women.'

'Very ungrateful of him,' said Colonel Dampier. 'Very well; if you see him again, tell him to hold his tongue till I send for him. And be good enough to hold your own, too.'

'Surely, sir,' said Harry Holt.

He stood waiting, like a soldier, for orders, for it seemed to him that the Colonel must have something more to say. And he was rewarded.

'If *that* was the man with Locke, we are betrayed,' said the Colonel after a minute. 'Locke will pocket that thousand pounds—scoundrel! Just in time! I wonder they are not here now.'

'Can I be of any use, sir?'

'No, Holt—no; I thank you very heartily. For the

present you can do nothing, except—get away as fast as you can.'

Harry bowed and left the room. Outside the door he met Viola Fairfax, who came up to him and shook hands most cordially. But they had not had time to exchange a word when Colonel Dampier followed him out of the library.

'Miss Fairfax, will you come here?' he said very gravely, and Harry felt himself dismissed.

'Ought I not to have spoken to Mr. Holt?' said Viola, not quite understanding the new sternness of her host's manner. 'He helped me that day, you know——'

'And he has helped you again, but you can talk to him another time,' said the Colonel. 'Listen to what he has told me. I think you ought to know it, for I seriously doubt, my dear Miss Fairfax, whether you are safe for the next twenty-four hours. It is the last chance your guardians have, and we cannot expect them not to make use of it.'

In a few words he told her of the man Hezekiah had seen.

'Now you see—connecting this with my son's meeting Locke and a stranger, and then Locke's disappearance—it is tolerably plain what has happened. I am extremely sorry. I trusted my own household, and plainly I was wrong. We can no longer hope that you are securely hidden. I need not say that I will still do all I can; but if they come, as is probable, they will come in force, and I must meet them alone. Goodenough may be down in time, but—what were you saying?'

'I was going to say, Colonel Dampier,' said Viola, turning red and pale, 'that this story may explain something else. It seems too wicked and dreadful—but you know what I think of that man.'

'I understand you,' the Colonel answered very gravely. 'But take care what you say. No doubt the evidence looks black. But I can hardly admit any sufficient motive for such a crime. Why should my son have been made the scapegoat—how do they advance their cause——'

The Colonel looked terribly disturbed, and spoke with most unusual hesitation. He was also extremely puzzled by the girl's manner. She came up and stood close to his desk, her eyes shining; she laid her hand unconsciously on his papers, and he saw that it trembled.

'I did not doubt that it was because of me,' she said. 'I have brought all this upon you, Colonel Dampier, and if the

worst had come to the worst, I hardly think I could have gone on living. But, thank God, it has not. And I don't think it will. By and by I will make you forgive me for all this dreadful trouble.'

'Pray do not imagine that I was reproaching you. Even if things had gone badly with Edwin, no just person could blame you,' said the Colonel, still a little stiffly. 'But you see, he is quite out of danger, so that we have nothing to complain of, though his would-be murderer may probably escape justice. It is your own affair that troubles me the most seriously at present, and the complications that are likely to follow. What am I to say to your guardians when they demand you at my hands?'

'You can only give me up to them,' said Viola, looking him straight in the face. 'I shall be twenty-one to-morrow, so the risk is not great.'

'But they are unprincipled men. No—no—you must not leave my house before to-morrow.'

He fell to pacing the room again, frowning in great distress and bewilderment. Then Viola's clear voice broke the silence, as she stood watching him.

'I know you will do your best for me. But I want you to promise me this, Colonel Dampier. If they come to-night, let me manage them in my own way. Let me say what I please to them, and whatever I may say, promise that you will support me in it, and not contradict me. Do not contradict me: will you be so very good as to promise me that?'

'Certainly I won't contradict you. Why should I?' said the Colonel with a deep sigh.

'Very well. Please remember that,' said Viola, and with an unusually grave and stately air she walked out of the room.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### VIOLA'S OWN WAY.

'And overpasses so his wildest dream.'

SEVERAL surprises were in store for Mr. George Goodenough when he arrived that evening at Stepford Hall. He had fortunately been able to travel down at once, on receiving

Colonel Dampier's telegram, but this had explained nothing. He found a house in a state of siege, one of its defenders, his friend Edwin, lying in bed with a wounded shoulder; and the first person he saw, crossing the hall as he came in, was a peculiarly graceful and beautiful girl, who turned out to be the Miss Fairfax whose disappearance had interested London for several months past.

Having listened to Colonel Dampier's account of the whole affair, which seemed to him one of the most curious stories he had heard for some time, George Goodenough ventured to ask whether the romance was made complete by an understanding between Miss Fairfax and Mr. Dampier. He perceived at once, however, that he had said the wrong thing. Colonel Dampier looked extremely annoyed.

'What could make you imagine such a thing?' he said. 'Nothing of the sort. Impossible—quite impossible, under the circumstances. Don't you see that?'

'I beg your pardon, I'm sure,' said George; 'I should have said it was very advisable under the circumstances! However, one can't judge for other people. My friend certainly had something on his mind when we were in Switzerland. I saw that, though he did not make a confidant of me. So I felt pleased at having hit on the explanation, as I thought. And any one who had seen the lady would need no excuse, I need not say.'

'In my son's position such an idea is absolutely out of the question,' said Colonel Dampier, with dignity.

But George was not convinced; and the more he saw of Miss Fairfax, for he dined peacefully with her and the Colonel, the more he was convinced of his own wisdom and perception. He did not at all enter into Colonel Dampier's scruples and stiffnesses. He thought Edwin a clever and a lucky fellow. To be sure, he did not feel quite sure of the girl. She had a sweet face, it was true; but it was just possible that she might set a higher value on herself than could be represented by an impoverished country squire.

'If Augustus Marston risked that shot, though, *he* must have thought it serious,' George reflected.

After dinner he went upstairs to see Edwin, and Colonel Dampier joined Viola in the library. Both were very silent: he was restless, and she sat in Edwin's chair turning over a book, but not reading. The atmosphere was electric. It

began to seem possible that after all the last evening of Viola's minority was to pass without any claim by the Marstons.

But the last train from London had come in, and even now the Tarringford hotel-keeper's best pair of horses were coming along the road at their best pace, bringing a very impatient old gentleman behind them. And as Viola sat there she heard the approach, the horses tramping swiftly up the avenue, and then she heard the wheels crunching the gravel outside the colonnade.

Colonel Dampier heard them now, and he stopped in his walk and looked at her.

'Failed—failed, my dear!' he said bitterly. 'But even now,' he added, his eyes brightening suddenly, 'I will hide you in the house, if you wish, and if they insist on a search, which possibly they may be able to do——'

'No, certainly I won't be hidden,' the girl said. Then, as the front door bell pealed loudly through the house, she came quickly across the room and held up her face to Colonel Dampier.

'Kiss me,' she said. 'Thank you from my heart for all you have done. And promise that you won't be angry with me, whatever I may do or say.'

'My dear Miss Fairfax——' Colonel Dampier began, extremely touched and astonished.

The girl darted away from him; and the next moment Firkins flung open the door and announced 'Sir Henry Marston.'

'Ask Mr. Goodenough to come down,' said her master aside to her, and then he stood prepared to receive Viola's guardian.

They recognised each other, though they had not met for many years, but neither of them offered his hand. Sir Henry, very pale and infirm, fixed eager eyes on Viola, and began to limp across the room towards her; but something in her face stopped him halfway. He took hold of a chair to support himself, and began to laugh nervously.

'Found at last, Miss Fairfax—found at last!' he said. 'And what excuse, pray, have you to offer to your best friends for such conduct as this—eh? Such conduct—why, you have been within an inch of bringing down my grey hairs—and so on. Never went through such a summer in my life; and what excuse, I wonder?'

'None that you will think good, Sir Henry,' Viola answered,

in a voice that rang as coldly as his own. 'Luckily the rest of the world does not agree with you. And if you mean the General and yourself by my "best friends," I am glad to say that I have found better.'

'Of course—of course! Is it likely that a young woman with your fortune would be long without friends? I don't wish to be uncivil to Colonel Dampier—I knew him once—and I am quite sure he has been misled, deceived, into receiving you here.'

'I have not been misled or deceived in any way, sir!' said Colonel Dampier. 'I am as well informed as yourself, and Miss Fairfax is welcome to my house as long as she chooses to make use of it.'

'A young lady who left her lawful protectors and masqueraded under a false name! I knew you were a madcap, Miss Viola, but I long refused to believe you capable of such unworthy behaviour. Yes, *unworthy* is the word.'

'I think,' said Viola, '*unworthy* is the word for those who persecuted me till I had no refuge but the wide world and the kindness of strangers.'

'Absurd exaggeration! Excuse me—I am an old man, and a good deal agitated. May I sit down?'

'Take this chair,' said Colonel Dampier, pushing one forward.

'Thank you, Colonel Dampier. Now, Viola, as I have found you, I suppose you will obey your guardian. I have a carriage at the door. I must ask you to make yourself ready at once and to come away with me.'

'Are you alone, Sir Henry?' asked Viola.

'Not precisely. My brother is not with me: he is in Scotland. But my authority is sufficient without his, remember.'

'And your son?'

'My son—is not with me here. I suppose he will meet us in town. My son has nothing to do with this affair,' said the old man, looking at her keenly.

She was slightly flushed, and she smiled a little, returning his gaze fearlessly. Colonel Dampier thought she had never looked so beautiful.

'Your son was here last night, as you probably know,' she said.

'Well, madam, what of that? Augustus has done his duty in helping his father and uncle to trace you. If he was here



last night, it was in order to receive information of the most valuable kind.'

'Yes; information which was worth a thousand pounds, I suppose, to my scoundrel of a butler,' said Colonel Dampier.

'All that is business, and I have practically left it to my son,' Sir Henry said, with a wave of the hand. 'Have the goodness, Miss Viola——'

'Who is with you, if you are not alone, and if it is neither your son nor the General?' said Viola, without moving.

'No one who will annoy you. Only an agent we have employed in this business, and who knows this country. And one or two others, in case of any resistance. But you are tired of giving trouble, I am sure—so we will thank Colonel Dampier for his hospitality, and go back to town by the next train. I think it leaves Tarringford at half-past ten. You will not be tired, I hope. It is not a very long journey.'

As Sir Henry talked it was plain that he was enjoying some considerable relief of mind. He had expected a much more disagreeable reception—a much more difficult task. Apparently he had no opposing elements to deal with except Viola herself, Colonel Dampier, who did not seem likely to be troublesome, and the old woman who had admitted him.

'You will come at once, if you please,' he said in a rather more peremptory tone.

Viola did not move.

'I am of age to-morrow,' she said. Have you forgotten that?'

'Not at all. But to-morrow is not to-day.'

'To-day will very soon be to-morrow. And I am not inclined to go with you, Sir Henry. I don't see why I should go with you. I am inclined to stay here a day or two longer, and then to go to Aunt Agnes in Jersey. That is my plan.'

'Oh, that is your plan, is it?' said the old man, trembling with excitement and anger. 'But it is not mine, let me tell you. I am still responsible for you, and I mean to take you to London to-night. There we will see about further arrangements. I am sure Colonel Dampier does not want the anxiety of keeping you here.'

'All I have to say is,' said Colonel Dampier quietly, 'that Miss Fairfax does not leave my house to-night except by her own free will. If she chooses to stay, stay she shall, Sir Henry Marston, and you will not attempt to remove her.'

'Oh, indeed—indeed!' cried Sir Henry, with a shrill laugh. 'To be sure, I forgot, Colonel Dampier is not your only champion. I see it all—yes, a very clever arrangement. I was warned of it, but as the gentleman has the good sense to keep himself in the background, I had forgotten for the moment. An agreeable escort to Jersey, no doubt!—Viola, come: I will not be defied in this way.'

His eyes blazed with anger; he raised himself with difficulty from his chair and made one or two steps towards her where she stood motionless.

'Sir!' thundered Colonel Dampier. 'What do you mean, sir——' But Viola turned towards him and checked him with a sign of her hand.

'Listen to me, Sir Henry,' she said, slowly and very clearly, flushing up to her hair. 'All this is unnecessary. I shall be of age in a few hours. I do not mean to go with you—and—I am engaged to be married.'

'Married! To whom? It is a lie! It is a rascally conspiracy to get hold of your fortune!' shrieked Sir Henry.

Two more people were now standing in the room. The door had been left ajar, and though they had come downstairs and along the hall without any attempt at walking quietly, none of the three in the room heard them till they actually stood within it. Thus Viola's words had reached them, and they joined the group as she ceased speaking—George Goodenough, grinning with enjoyment, and Edwin Dampier, white as death in his bandages, a shawl thrown round him instead of his coat, holding fast by his friend's arm. Across the room his eyes and Viola's met. He dropped George and walked straight over to her; she slipped her hand into his uninjured arm, and there they stood together. It was not only Sir Henry Marston who stared at them with amazement and horror; but Colonel Dampier, though deeply indignant, held his peace for the moment, while the elder man writhed with rage, and poured out a torrent of abusive language, which neither Edwin nor Viola heard at all.

George Goodenough bore it as long as he could, and then went went up to Sir Henry Marston and touched him on the shoulder.

'Come, sir, your language is actionable,' he said. 'Besides, you are forgetting that there is a lady in the room.'

At first his remonstrances seemed quite useless.

'You are doing yourself no good at all, Sir Henry,' he

persisted. 'Look here, come with me into another room and I will explain everything.'

In another minute his manly strength, firmness, and good humour had prevailed with the furious old man, who now was trembling and almost senseless after his fit of rage. He gave him his arm and took him to the door, turning round there to beckon to Colonel Dampier and whisper in his ear—'I'll give him a glass of wine, tell him about last night, say we won't prosecute, and pack him off back to London without seeing her again.'

For a few moments, after the door had closed behind these two, there was a painful silence in the library. Colonel Dampier did not know what to say; he stood by his desk looking down vaguely at his papers, as if he wanted to find refuge among them from the extraordinary disappointments of life, perhaps consolation for the loss of another battle. Then Viola drew herself suddenly away from Edwin and came up to him.

'Won't you forgive me?' she said. 'You promised not to contradict me, whatever I might say, and you did not—that was good of you.'

'It is not you I am angry with,' said Colonel Dampier, and his stern voice trembled a little. 'But Edwin—he must know what I think of him.'

'Oh, you don't understand. It is not Edwin's fault—it is all mine. He is as much astonished as you are. It is only another of my freaks—another——'

But Edwin had followed her across the room, and his arm was round her, and in his father's very presence he bent his happy face to hers and kissed Viola.

Presently they heard the wheels of the bad guardian's carriage crunching the gravel once more as he drove away.

Mrs. Downes always persisted that she had done it all; that her spirited conduct with regard to that very queer advertisement had brought about this, the best marriage in every way that a Dampier of Stepford had made for many generations. Jessie, too, though more half-heartedly, was ready to claim her share in the credit of it. But even Jessie's clouds were soon cleared away. After a few weeks she came to her mother and told her that she had met Joseph Arnold in the fields one day, and that he had said he could not get on without her, and had asked her to let bygones be bygones and to renew the

engagement. Jessie, whose faithful heart had suffered keenly in spite of all Viola's kindness, told her mother this with smiles and tears; and Mrs. Downes, though she sighed, was not altogether sorry.

'We don't all get what we deserve, Mr. Edwin,' she said to her young squire. 'He'll make her a good husband, as husbands go, and though it seems queer to you and to me, I believe nobody else would suit Jessie as well. So we're made, you see.'

As for old Harry Holt, Miss Maria bought him a smart new coat for the festivities on Mr. Edwin's wedding-day. It was a fresh start in the world for him. His debts being paid, he at once began to run up new ones, feeling that he had seven hundred pounds to play at ducks and drakes with.

The mysterious shot was never publicly accounted for, and Locke was never heard of at Stepford again; it is supposed that he went abroad immediately with his ill-earned money, and being fearful of the consequence of another man's crime, had done his best to avoid all former acquaintances. Firkins, however, always declared that he was innocent of the blacker part of the business, and that no one was more astonished or more horrified when the young master came in wounded from his dark night's walk.

Edwin and Viola, in a happy married life which has lost none of its early romance for either one or the other, find no trouble in the remembrance of the days when she was in the power of unscrupulous guardians and he was a dreamy, lonely youth plodding through bogs in the old river meadows, with little better to think about. Their great fortune, unselfishly and nobly spent, gives occupation enough to two souls equally gentle and generous, though hers is the eager giving, his the wise restraining power. And sometimes they laugh together over the old story of the advertisement, and at Stepford, when they come with certain small and curly-headed companions to see Mrs. Downes in her armchair by the fire, their talk of old days is as good as a fairy-tale for the children.

'Father ran away from mother,' they cry, with merry laughter. 'He was so afraid of mother, he ran right away over the sea. Isn't it true, Mrs. Downes, isn't it true?'

'He came back, though, God bless him!' says Mrs. Downes, laughing too, though her eyes are dim.

## FROM MY ATTIC WINDOW.

---

**Heat selfishness.** THIS summer, or at least the summer that was 'this' summer a few weeks ago, had a moral which cannot be skipped. This particular moral is unconnected with water supplies or drainage, or even holidays. The moral is that we English and Scotch and Irish need not after all take any particular credit to ourselves for being the most altruistic and philanthropic of the nations. It is the effect of climate. This moral I evolved on my own account—what matter that it has been evolved on some one else's account every summer of the century?—from observing that on the hottest of the days I ceased to take any interest in the work of any societies. I began to wonder how any one ever had the energy to construct anything with a capital letter—Associations or what not. As the heat increased my enthusiasms decreased, and I grew like—

‘That wicked young lady of Parma,  
Whose conduct grew calmer and calmer,  
When they said, “Are you dumb?”  
She merely said, “Hum!”  
That provoking young lady of Parma.’

‘Isms’ and ‘ities’ and all abstractions lose interest when the thermometer is making records on its account, and other people, barring one's baby and a few notable exceptions, are chiefly a mistake and big blot on a simmering, glaring landscape. Therefore it stands to reason that if I lived in a country where the thermometer was taking that unnecessarily exalted view of its own functions for half the year, I and all other such frivolous persons would do nothing and be nothing until after daylight hours. All charities and guilds would automatically cease if anything happened to the Gulf Stream, or whatever natural or unnatural phenomenon gives us our usually amiable and gently disposed climate.

When I next meet excellent and well-meaning persons who

prate of the formation of societies and the general spirit of 'help my neighbour' which happily still characterises us, I shall murmur 'Gulf Stream,' or 'the tropics,' and those mysterious words will or should reduce the exalted one to a state of humility.

\* \* \* \* \*

**How a queen is made.** How differently we arranged things when we were children ! We imagined kings and queens always did what they liked, never needed to bother about lessons, or trouble about doing what they were told. But we are wiser and sadder now. We know that queens, although born, have also to be made, and the making is not at all an easy process for the queen. It involves all kinds of special discipline, to say nothing of a general and specialised education. The young girl who woke up a few weeks ago to find herself a queen has discovered this. Queen Wilhelmina has lived a simpler and more severe life than most girls in this country. Luxury and self-indulgence were rigorously kept out of the life of the child-queen. Physically she has been hardened, not protected. Closed carriages were rare in the royal stables. Rain or snow, east or north wind, the young girl and her mother have driven about in an open barouche ; occasionally the Queen herself driving their four-in-hand. Skating and walking in full measure have been allowed her, but not a bicycle. Then the list of her studies is sufficiently formidable. Foreign languages, of course—English, German, French, and Italian—she speaks with ease and fluency. Russian she has attacked, and even Malay, the language of the Dutch colonies of the East. Her other studies have been history—history pre-eminently and with great attention to detail—jurisprudence, political economy, military tactics, seamanship, physics, chemistry, and theology. It is no light matter this being educated to be a monarch.

And these things are a parable over and above being facts. For it is obvious that in that other part of our education, which we do not get in schoolrooms nor in books—the education which life gives us—the higher the position for which we are destined, and the greater our capabilities, the longer and more severe will that education be. Perhaps some soul which is nearly overwhelmed with the severity of its lessons may see this, and remember and understand.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Paying work.** In the last few weeks two methods of earning a living have been suggested to me from different sources which seem to me worth handing on. Neither of them, let me say at the start, are available for those who are without sufficient capital—begged, borrowed, or stolen—to get themselves a training. The first is the old-fashioned way of poultry, dairy and fruit farming; but though the way is old, probably as old as Eve, the conditions which might make it profitable are changing. It is obvious that girls and women who have had no training cannot be expected by the unaided light of nature to grow fruit, pack it in the most scientific way, and understand the market so accurately as to dispose of it in the most advantageous way. The same thing applies to poultry and dairy produce. Yet since there is a steady demand for all these commodities—in fact, the supply never is large enough to meet it—somebody must make a living out of them. And why should not more girls, especially those who have command of a piece of land, or the means of getting it, be among those somebodies? An experiment towards giving them the necessary training for that end is about to be made at Reading, with which the Countess of Warwick's name is associated. If it succeeds—and there is no reason why it should not succeed—it may help to solve the land problem as well as the question of work for women. The idea is to found a school where girls may have theoretical and practical instruction in the growing, packing, marketing of fruit and flowers, the cultivation of tomatoes and mushrooms, bee-keeping and poultry rearing, and all such light farming for which women are suited. It has now got beyond the idea stage, and has a home and a definite programme. A house in Reading, with necessary grounds attached, has been taken to form a hostel to be a recognised part of the Reading College. Anyhow, the idea was distinctly worth translating into an experiment.

Another occupation which is open to women of brains, energy, and practical ability, is that of a chemist. An article in one of the reviews was devoted to pointing out how few women chemists were, and asking why there are no more. It says: 'Here and there a lady has carried on business as a chemist, with results on the whole satisfactory. From one cause or another—generally marriage or failing health—the lady chemists have dwindled down to two or three.' Of course, the marriage difficulty is very sad. But seriously, it seems a

pity that a work for which educated women with deft hands and quick and reliable eyesight would be particularly fitted has been so little adopted. It is true the training costs about £200; but the chances of posts and the profits of a chemist are many. It is infinitely better than governing for women who have the initiative to try it.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The disadvantage of youth.**

This mad rage for youth is impious and foolish. It is invading all professions, except perhaps medicine, and nearly every trade, and in the teaching profession it is worst of all. 'It is only the young who have any chance nowadays,' is what one hears from the lips of teachers, and especially high-school matrons. 'Ours is the only profession where experience counts for nothing,' says another. The tendency is growing so fast that a woman will soon be superannuated at thirty, which will give a college-bred teacher about seven years of working life at most.

The reasons are not far and not difficult to find. Teaching methods are continually being improved upon. Degrees of higher and higher standard are being obtained by the youngest generation, who have had their ways paved for them by the elder. It is essential to be up-to-date, and to be able to advertise the highest degrees. Therefore we must have young women. Moreover, games must be supervised and played, older women find the strain of teaching and playing too much. Older women, too, get into a groove after they have been teaching for seven years or so, they lose their vitality, their freshness, and even their health. Then younger women must take their place.

Heartless, but true, teachers do grow groovy, do lose their vitality and their health. 'I'm fast getting into a school machine and ceasing to be a woman,' a teacher, who was certainly as full of vitality as one could hope for or desire a year or two ago, said to me a little while ago. The fatal regularity of terms, the prospect of going on teaching the same thing year in and year on, does deaden the vital powers and make the teacher feel more like a machine than a living soul. The question of pay also comes in, for salaries, though they often sound very fair in the genuine high school, do not offer much prospect for old age when holidays and living are taken into consideration.



And the remedy? For such a gloomy outlook must surely have its relief. Does the remedy not lie along the lines of the Sabbath year, which is in force in some colleges in America? Every sixth or seventh year let it be a recognised thing that every teacher goes for her year of rest, her salary meantime continuing. And in that year of rest she will take care either by travel or in some other way to investigate new methods, get in touch with fresh ideas and theories, and above all, fresh minds. She will come back with ripe experience added to all the early enthusiasm, or something better, renewed health and spirits, in fact, rejuvenated. And I would just like to add a little prescription of my own for the rejuvenating process, only I would have the medicine taken in small doses all the time. Mix, where possible and when possible, with men folk; not necessarily with a view to marrying them, but because there is an element in men's minds and character—masculinity, I suppose—which is necessary to just judgments and accurate views of life and realities. The views of a man who never mixes with any cultured women are hopelessly biassed and untrustworthy. The ideas of a group of women who never mix or exchange ideas or converse with manly men are equally prejudiced and one-sided. Such converse helps to keep both sexes sane.

And if and when these prescriptions are applied, and the epidemic of juvenility among teachers is stayed, the taught will reap the benefit. For ripeness of character does count for something. And we do not learn all the lessons of life before we are thirty.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Order of Deaconesses.** It seems quite clear that the Order of Deaconesses, as a definite and recognised part of Church organisation, and distinct from sisterhoods, is being again revived in the Church of England—'slowly and with halting steps,' the Bishop of Winchester says, 'but surely.' The diocese of Exeter is one in which deaconesses are a recognised fact. It has its own centre for training deaconesses, and at the last meeting of the Diocesan Mission the Bishop recommended to their attention a new work on 'The Ministry of Deaconesses,' by Deaconess Cecilia Robinson. This book is both a history of the office of deaconess since Apostolic days and an appeal for its revival. 'Until the time comes

when each diocese shall have its own centre for training deaconesses,' Miss Robinson asks, 'why should we not follow the example of the American Church, and establish a few principal training colleges to which bishops might send candidates to receive them back before ordination?' There are, I take it, two sides and two strong sets of opinion on the question of the 'female diaconate,' as understood in this book. It certainly seems foreign to the traditions of the English Church of the Reformation to bind women down to remain unmarried, and to exact vows of obedience to their parish priests. But there can be no doubt that it is a means of enormous access of strength to the Church, whether Established or Free, to have any body of women, specially trained and educated, working under its direction and in harmony with its aims.

The power of women when they are organised and in earnest is one which it is not possible to measure. The Church in the days of the Apostle had the ministration of queens among women. The Church in the Middle Ages had the quiet service of its convent-bred women. The Church to-day, all over the world, is just beginning to realise what an untried force they have in Christian women.

ANNIE GROSER HURD.

## The China Cupboard.

ARRANGED BY CHELSEA CHINA.

(For the regulations of all 'Monthly Packet' Competitions, see p. 298.)

### FIRST SHELF.

#### VARIETY SUBJECT.

Six favourite religious poems (not hymns in actual use), giving reasons and short quotations.

Definitions are always difficult. *Ruby's* arrangement is so good that Chelsea China must have given her the prize if she had not included what certainly is 'a hymn in actual use'—Cardinal Newman's 'Lead, Kindly Light.' Technically, therefore, she seems to have disqualified herself; and *Einsam* sends a very interesting list. All are good. Introduction to 'In Memoriam,' Browning's 'Saul,' Milton's 'Hymn to the Nativity,' C. Rossetti's 'Uphill,' Charles Wesley's 'Come, O thou-traveller unknown,' and Wordsworth's 'Ode to Immortality' would be Chelsea China's choice. She apologises to *Holly Leaf* for the omission of her 'Maiden of Our Own Day,' which fully deserved a first class.

#### SIX FAVOURITE RELIGIOUS POEMS.

What a rich variety of jewels here! As great as in sacred music, which includes the Gregorian chant, Mozart's masses, and Dyke's hymn tunes.

Six will not even include all my favourite *styles*. As I have no *first* favourite I will begin with the first in chronological order, a little poem of the fifteenth century, *slightly* altered from the original. Even *my* knowledge of it dates so far back that I quite forget where I lighted on it. From a literary point of view it is, *as a whole*, to modern ears, somewhat rough-edged and clumsy, but I love it for its spirit of simple, childlike devotion and its old-time quaintness. I have, however, read nothing more truly answering to the poetical ideal than this stanza, which, as it were, forms the heart of the poem:—

1. 'White was His hallowed Breast,  
And red His bloody side,  
*Wau was His Face fairest,*  
His wounds deep and wide:  
Stark weren His Arms  
High spread upon the Rood;  
From five wounds of His Body  
The streams ran of Blood!'

The first line runs—

'Love is life that lasteth aye,'

and gives to the poem its title, 'The Love that lasteth aye.'

2. Leaping from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, I hear a fresh, joyous voice singing

‘A country afar, beyond the stars,’  
where

‘above noise and danger  
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,  
And *One born in a manger*  
*Commands the sacred files.*’

Here is a quite unhackneyed description of heaven. To me there is something specially happy in the remembrance of the manger in all the glory and triumph of New Jerusalem. The singer is Henry Vaughan.

3. My next author is saintly Bishop Heber, writer of the familiar and picturesque missionary hymn, ‘From Greenland’s icy mountains.’

These lines, too, may be familiar, but they are none the less beautiful :—

‘By cool Siloam’s shady rill  
How fair the Lily grows ;  
How sweet the breath beneath the hill  
Of Sharon’s dewy Rose !’

One sees the Eastern flowers in all their rich profusion, inhales their scent, and hears the gurgling stream in the music of the verse, and one thinks how Heber himself must have been such a child as he likens to the fragrant blooms. Then the music changes into the minor key, and we feel the autumnal chill :—

‘By cool Siloam’s shady rill  
*The Lily must decay,*  
The Rose that blooms beneath the hill  
*Must shortly fade away.*’

The wail becomes the reminder of a storm, but the poem ends with grand major chords, describing the victorious march of the Christian soul.

4. Coleridge’s ‘Ancient Mariner’ would not be classed ordinarily as a ‘religious poem,’ I suppose, but I would ask, Is there any poem in our language which gives more important religious teaching, or more forcibly drives its lesson home? Wordsworth has the same lesson to convey in ‘Hart-leap Well,’ but how dry and didactic his delivery of it, compared with Coleridge’s ! Wordsworth and Browning *can* be melodious, but do not sing their lessons ; S. T. Coleridge cannot open his mouth without singing. But it is not only, or chiefly, its music which makes this marvellous poem dwell in the memory ; it is its *dramatic strength*. Like the wedding guest, we ‘cannot choose but hear,’ and each scene brings its own peculiar thrill. There is consummate art in setting the tragic story within the bustle and merriment of a wedding feast.

It always seems to me a thousand pities this unique poem is not more known *in extenso*. Happily all are familiar with that sublimely simple verse—

‘He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small ;  
For the dear Lord who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.’

But how many know what gave freedom to the prisoner of Remorse?

‘Beyond the shadow of the ship,  
*I watched the watersnakes,*  
O happy living things ! No tongue  
Their beauty might declare :  
*A spring of love gushed from my heart,*  
*And I blessed them unaware.*

*The selfsame moment I could pray ;*

*The albatross fell off and sank  
Like lead into the sea.'*

5. It is hard to choose *one* from the 'Christian Year' chaplet, but worse to leave Keble out altogether. The poem for the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity perhaps illustrates as well as any other his special gift of reading and painting parables in nature.

'Red o'er the forest peers the setting sun,  
The line of yellow light dies fast away  
That crown'd the eastern copse ; and chill and dun  
Falls on the moor the brief November day.

See the calm leaves float  
Each to his rest beneath their parent shade.

Soon o'er their heads blithe April airs shall sing,  
A thousand wildflowers round them shall unfold,  
The green buds glisten in the dews of spring,  
And all be vernal rapture as of old.

Unconscious they in waste oblivion lie,  
In all the world of busy life around  
No thought of them ; in all the bounteous sky  
No drop for them of kindly influence found.

Man's portion is to die and rise again—  
Yet he complains. . . .

6. Beauty of form in combination with freest fervour of religious exultation reaches surely the highest point of perfection in Tennyson's 'St. Agnes.'

'Deep on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon :  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes ;  
May my soul follow soon !

Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,  
Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
In raiment white and clean.

EINSAM.

## RELIGIOUS POEMS.

### I. POEM—'The Waiting,' by Whittier.

#### *Quotations.*

'O power to do ! O baffled will ?  
O prayer and action, ye are one  
Who may not strive, may yet fulfil  
The harder task of standing still.

'For one shall grasp and one resign,  
One drink life's rue, and one its wine,  
And God shall make the balance good.'

#### *Reason.*

The hardest time to live—to live, that is to one's standard—is the time that requires no action, no great deeds, simply waiting, and hence the greatest need for this to be known by all, that 'they also serve who only stand and wait' (Milton). One's faith in this may be again kindled by the words of the poet, for it is a hard truth to realise and the greatest help one needs.

## II. POEM—'The Sleep,' by Mrs. Browning.

*Quotation.*

'O earth, so full of dreary noises ;  
 O men, with wailing in your voices ;  
 O delved gold, the wailers heap ;  
 O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall !  
 God makes a silence through you all,  
 And "giveth His beloved sleep."

*Reason.*

On earth no perfect rest can be found, for in sleep through the phantoms of the night ; but in death God's gracious sleep alone is peace. The thought that death is a gift of God takes the sting from it. The Great Separator now flings off his robes of terror and we see him in those of mercy, for, as this thought implies, he comes as a blessing from God to His beloved and brings Peace.

## III. POEM—'Huc in Altum,' from "Songs in the Night."

*Quotations.*

'To souls that love Thee all is right ;  
 Though dark and long the hours of night,  
 To humble souls God sends the light  
 And makes it Day.  
 'What though for weary nights and days  
 We've toiled in vain ;  
 The anchor at His word we'll raise  
 And try again.  
 'His master hand the helm will steer—  
 We ask no more.'

*Reason.*

God is the highest aim, but in life, amid the din of the world, too often forgotten. How better can the soul be reminded of its aim than by the assurance that they who launch their ships on the sea of life have God at the helm ?

## IV. POEM—'Compensation,' by Frances R. Havergal.

*Quotation.*

'Yet he who hath never a conflict  
 Hath never a victor's palm ;  
 And only the toiler knows the sweetness  
 Of rest and calm.  
 'The peak that is nearer the storm clouds  
 Is nearer the stars of light.'

*Reason.*

One needs to know often and greatly that one's lot is not harder than others in this world. 'That the balance of sorrow and joy is held with an even hand,' not one of us know all sorrow, not one all joy—

'For is not His will the wisest, is not  
 His choice the best ?  
 And in perfect acquiescence is there  
 Not perfect rest ?'

## V. POEM—'The Pillar of the Cloud,' by Cardinal Newman.

*Quotation.*

'Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,  
 Lead Thou me on.'  
 'Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see  
 The distant scene ; one step enough for me.'

Reason.

The beauty of the thought that now, as in the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, they were guided by the Pillar of the Cloud, so we, too, are aided by an invisible hand, and each step we take, to us in the dark, is but the result of God's invisible guiding power.

VI. POEM—'Hymn to the Nativity,' by Milton.

Quotations.

'But peaceful was the night  
Wherein the Prince of Light  
His reign of peace upon the earth began :  
The winds with wonder whist,  
Smoothly the waters kist,  
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean.'

'So when the sun in bed,  
Curtained with cloudy red,  
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave.'

Reason.

The day to which we owe so much, the birthday of the Prince of Peace, what greater attraction can the poem have? Imagination scarcely suffices to picture that scene, but in this all that is needed to complete it is found : we learn how nature received that One.

'The sun hid his head for shame,  
As his inferior flame  
The new enlightened world no more should need ;  
He saw a greater Sun appear  
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.'

RUBY.

PRIZE WINNER FOR AUGUST.

Mrs. Doody, Nantwich.

SUBJECT FOR OCTOBER.

'The Life History of a Dragon Fly.'

SECOND SHELF.

CHARACTER STUDY FOR AUGUST.

A Town.

The description of the towns has been very well done, and as usual it is difficult to assign the prize. The four or five best run each other very hard, and Chelsea China can only say that *Sea Maiden's* takes her fancy particularly and gives the 'atmosphere' of the place. She will not relegate any one this month to the second class. 'Dei Donum' is excellent. Chelsea China is sorry to lose any of the papers. All are characteristic.

A TOWN.

The Old Town nestles as closely as possible into the side of the hills. Farther down in the valley, nearer to the river, the New Town has sprung up, much larger and more deserving of its title than the knot of red-roofed cottages and the one steep street which make up the Old Town.

These cottages lie at the foot of the hills where the Burn of Sorrow joins the Burn of Care, and the two mingled flow on as Douleur Burn, and give their sad name to the Old Town. The names were given long ago, and generations have learnt to call both town and burn by another name, Dollar, and few know its origin.

That queen who, even more than she who so signed herself, deserved the title 'la reine malheureuse,' stayed a few days at the Castle Gloume, as it was then called, which stands in the beautiful glen through which the burn runs. In her captivity at Lochleven, which can be seen from the hills which ring the castle round, did she ever think of the little burn to which she left its name of sorrow, the douleur which still haunts it, and is part of its great charm?

The New Town has no romance about it. It has grown in later days to meet the needs of more prosaic people; but about that steep, stony street, and round those little red-roofed houses the glamour clings.

No shops, no 'works,' only those few houses nestling under the shadow of the great hills as if seeking their protection. Protection they have needed, for great guns have boomed out over the valley, and the names have not always been meaningless.

'To waken on the beach at Glam' was the dream nearest heaven to a man I read of lately, and to some I know well, and to one especially to whom the little place has been Douleur indeed, there could be no nearer approach to the earthly paradise than to walk through the hills from Glen Devon, and reach Dollar at sunset—a Dollar sunset—when the sun seems to linger before sinking behind the hills as though loth to withdraw out of sight of such a lovely spot.

'A haunt of ancient peace'—not the peace which has never been broken, but the greater, truer peace which comes after long strife and unrest—with the tinge of sadness those who have sung sorrow never wholly lose—this to me the character note of Dollar.

And such is its glamour that its children by birth or adoption long for it in exile as longed those unhappy shades whom Virgil saw stretch forth their hands with deep love of the farther shore; and mourn in their hearts as those who by the waters of Babylon wept when they remembered Zion.—  
SEA MAIDEN.

---

#### A TOWN.

This picturesque Cornish town has so strong a personality that once seen it can never be forgotten. It follows the example of the saint after whom it is named, by looking upon cleanliness as a sinful luxury. But in spite of the risks of typhoid fever and minor evils, the fascinated visitor returns again and again.

The town starts half-way up a castle-crowned hill with terraces of uninteresting modern houses, whose windows seem staring in wonder at the beautiful blue bay beneath; they are notable through being the only washed things in the place—at all hours of the day they may be seen undergoing a vigorous syringing from the outside. After this faint threat of being conventional the town grows wild and the charm begins; houses of all shapes and sizes lie huddled together, as though they had been thrown into their places haphazard. Stone steps at right angles with the walls lead up to doors and windows; sometimes a steep flight connects one street with another or ends abruptly in the sea. Its steps and arches give the town a foreign look.

In the quaint old church during service the lapping of the waves outside can be heard, and the strong scent of pilchards explains the prayer for the 'harvest of the sea.' The old part of the town has the peculiarity of being an isthmus. Day and night it listens to the musical moan of the sea, and at all times seems wrestling with the breakers.



The further end of the town consists of some straggling huts and a cluster of pig-styes on a rocky hill surmounted by a coastguard's cottage. This hill is called 'The Island,' and is really one when a stormy wind arises, for then huge waves break over a narrow street from one bay to the other. Here the town has one of the prettiest natural rockeries in the world—sea-samphire, asters, pinks, and campion look up smiling after each fresh shower of spray. Amongst the many characteristics of this town may be mentioned its power of attracting artists and cats; both abound, but the latter predominate—seventy-eight cats were counted in the course of a short walk through the streets. They lie curled up on tub and in basket, they frequent each roof and flight of steps, and take a great interest in the unloading of fish by the quay. The artists send pictures of the place to the Academy—this has had the effect of making the town self-conscious: when looked at the grey walls seem to blush a tender green and pink, the girls carrying yellow-rimmed, brown earthenware pots fall into picturesque attitudes, and the seagulls pose upon the rocks.—WINIFRED SPURLING.

---

CLASS LIST FOR AUGUST.

DISTINCTION.

Winifred Spurling, Nora, M. Y. S., E. O. B., Tartar.

CLASS I.

Miranda, Lindum, Dinah Doe, Lag Last, Fa-ik, Holly Leaf, Spectacles, Shenn Varo, H. T. G., Ruby, Scotland Yard, Rufus.

PRIZE WINNER FOR AUGUST.

Miss S. G. Newstead, 9, York Place, Clifton, Bristol.

---

SUBJECT FOR OCTOBER.

'He is a character.' 'He has character.' 'He has lost his character.' 'That was good for the child's character.' Discriminate between the uses of the word 'character' in these sentences.

---

SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR AUGUST.

1. Who called on the 'sun-burn'd sicklemen of August weary' to 'make holy-day'?
2. What is a kern-baby?
3. Quote passages showing what a 'blood-red ear found in the husking' denoted to Evangeline and Minne-haha.
4. What befell the 'lovely young Lavinia' when she went to 'glean in Palemon's fields'?
5. Of whom is it said (1) that she 'stood in tears among the alien corn,' and (2) that

'She stood breast-high amid the corn,  
Clasped by the golden light of morn'?

6. Give one verse from a favourite song on the subject of these questions.

ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS.

(Harvest.)

('Nature's Bank-dividends.'—HALIBURTON.)

1. Iris, in the Harvest Masque. (SHAKSPERE'S *Tempest*, act iv. sc. i.)
2. A doll or image, made of corn, or at least trimmed with it, and carried before the reapers at the 'Harvest Home.' There are various

ceremonies connected with it in different parts of the country, all pointing more or less to ancient rites in the worship of Ceres. (See BRAND'S 'Antiquities,' and many other authorities.)

3. (a) 'The maize was husked, and the maidens  
Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that betokened a lover.'  
(*'Evangeline,'* ii. 4. LONGFELLOW.)

- (b) 'Whene'er some lovely maiden  
Found a red ear in the husking,  
"Nushka," cried they all together,  
"Nushka! you shall have a sweetheart,  
You shall have a handsome husband!"'  
(*'Hiawatha,'* xiii. LONGFELLOW.)

4. Palemon, the rich owner of the fields, fell in love with her, and finding that she was the daughter of an old friend, married her. (THOMSON'S 'Seasons'—Autumn.)

5. Of Ruth. (1) KEAT'S 'Ode to a Nightingale.'  
(2) HOOD. 'Ruth—a Song.'

6. A great variety of songs are chosen. A Harvest Home song was thought of and seems the most appropriate, but marks are given to all who have given songs at all. Perhaps the best are STIRLING'S 'All among the barley' and CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S 'August Song.' TENNYSON'S 'Tears, idle tears,' brings in an effective note of contrast, but LONGFELLOW'S 'Reaper' is almost too sad to be quoted in this connection, and has rather the effect of 'snow in harvest.'

#### MARKS FOR AUGUST.

60: *All-Fours, A. C. R., Athena, Clio, Cymraes, Double-Dummy, Einsam, Eleanor, E. T., Irnham, Klee, Lenore, Melton Mowbray, Nemo, Penfeather, Sophonisba, The Blue Cat, Thorshaven, W. Adey, White Cat.* 57: *Aspley Guise.* 55: *Cavalier, Honeylands, Kittiwake, Sea Maiden, Syndicate, Trimmer.* 53: *Isabel.* 50: *Helen, Malaprop, Scott.* 40: *Εγκρατεια, M. R. A., R. V. H.* 38: *E. V. B.* 35: *Findhorn.*

*Fourteen Streams* is credited with 60 marks for July.

#### SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR OCTOBER.

(*'Wise saws and modern instances.'*)

1. (a) 'A verse may find him who a sermon flies.'  
(b) 'Jewels, five words long,  
That on the stretched forefinger of all Time  
Sparkle for ever.'
2. (a) 'Tell truth and shame the Devil.'  
(b) 'God's gift was that man should conceive of truth,  
And yearn to gain it.'
3. (a) 'To be weak is miserable.'  
(b) 'O well for him whose will is strong.'
4. (a) 'Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,  
Makes that and the action fine.'  
(b) 'Hitch your waggon to a star.'
5. (a) 'Be wisely worldly, but not worldly wise.'  
(b) 'Doänt thou marry for money, but go where money is.'  
Give author and source of all the above, and
6. Find another pair of sayings to match them.

THIRD SHELF.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—I wish my fellow-spiders would throw light by the wisdom of their discussions on this point, 'Where does individual influence end?' Who is one's weaker brother? Because some people gamble, is there never to be a game at cards? (that is not quite what I mean, because you *can* play cards without money). The theatre is more to the point, or buying things that are dangerous to make.

What are your views about Palmistry and kindred questions? If everything that can be rendered injurious by its misuse is to be condemned, where are we to stop? You will understand 'how to put it.' I am sure it is that sort of difficulty that makes one wish to 'go to a nunnery.'

I hope my thanks will reach S. M. E. for the proverbs: they were most useful to me.

Yours truly,  
GRAY SQUIRREL.

August 11th.

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—Having seen a letter addressed to you in 'The China Cupboard' of THE MONTHLY PACKET for this month (August), headed 'Wanted—a Bridge,' and suggesting the promotion of, and discussion upon, a scheme for training girls on leaving the schools for domestic service, I write to say that there is at present, and has been in working order for some time, such a school at 4, Princes Road, Liverpool, under the auspices of 'The Liverpool Technical College for Women,' of which I am a member of Committee. As I shall be from home for the next month, I am writing to the lady in charge and am asking her to send you the prospectus, as it may be of interest to you and to readers of THE MONTHLY PACKET. We have found that both parents and pupils take great interest in the work, and every day shows the benefit of the scheme.

Yours truly,  
BERTHA TINNE.

DEAR MADAM,—I cannot resist the temptation to send you the second verse of—

'Tender-handed stroke the nettle,'

quoted in July MONTHLY PACKET, though I daresay you know it already, and which runs thus—

'Tis the same with human nature,  
Treat them kindly, they rebel;  
Be as rough as nutmeg-grater,  
And the rogues obey you well.'

It was doubtless added by a later poet, but certainly contains an element of truth, as does also the continuation of Burns's lines—

'Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see oursel's as others see us';

to which was added, though I do not know by whom—

'But how much better if by spells,  
Others could see us as we see oursel's.'

Pray forgive my taking up your time thus. I can only plead in extenuation that my first cousin, the late Mrs. Rundle Charles, was a friend or acquaintance and admirer of Miss Yonge, and that I have been a delighted reader of the M. P. for over thirty years, and am now forwarding it regularly to a niece.

Believe me to be sincerely yours,

(Miss) EDITH CORNISH.

## LETTERS TO MY GROWN-UP GRANDDAUGHTERS (REVIVED).

In my own young days, dear Chelsea China, some letters in the dear old M. P. under this title were a great help and interest. I am by no means competent, I fear, to emulate them, but if some one could do so I think the young generation now might like them.

As an elderly woman (though not a real grandmother), one comes across so many hard problems. For one, How are young men of small means to marry? In America, I am told, they can and do. Indeed, 'cannot afford to do without a wife!' In England now (is it not rather to our shame?) they tell one, 'Oh, a wife would require a bicycle at least kept, if not a horse, perhaps a boat; two or three servants, and a great many dresses and hats; and I can't do it.'

Now, scrubbing a room is not, for a strong girl, really any harder than a tennis tournament; hanging out clothes than rowing; ironing than bicycling; cooking than gardening; pushing a child's mail-cart than mowing a lawn. All these things are done for fun—the alternative ones, I mean. A good wife in England really ought to save a husband expense, as well as in America or Switzerland. Then, is not a dear little baby far more interesting and not in the least harder work than a pug-dog or collie? Why might not a young couple marry, settle in a 5s. a week cottage, or three rooms, and 'do' for themselves? If this lady had learnt cooking, washing, housework, and needlework properly, and was content to forego all 'society' that despised her way of life?

Why should not a young man like a quiet walk with his wife, a dig and smoke in his own garden, or a neat little supper with a friend, as much as his 'working-class' brother does? Why should he not sing to his wife, play to her, carve or draw just as well as in a large house? Of course, to marry on £150 a year, try to pay a rent of £20, keep a miserable servant for an £8 wage, put out the washing, and skimp in food and firing, is miserable work. But an artisan on a £3 a week wage considers himself rich, and his wife, if worth her salt, can keep herself and six or seven children in health and comfort, and a little laid by for a 'rainy day' or the doctor.

Yours very truly,  
ALICE G. PALEY.

Will any one lend me 'Waynflete,' by Miss Coleridge. I will pay postage.—MISS HEMMANS, Holbeach Vicarage, Lincolnshire.

## SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

## MELANESIA—EARLY DAYS.

## QUESTIONS FOR OCTOBER.

37. What is the greatest mental obstacle to the conversion of uncivilised races? How should it be met? Or

What do you consider the two or three practical difficulties on the part of the missionary to the uncivilised? How conquered?

38. What islands form Melanesia? Relate how Bishop Selwyn began work among them.

39. What methods have always been followed in working this Mission?

40. Give a short account of the work of John Coleridge Patteson here, previous to his consecration.

Books recommended :—*Classified Digest of S.P.G.*; *Under His Banner*; *The Life of Bishop Patteson*, by C. M. Yonge (Macmillan, 12s.); *Life of Bishop*

*Patteson for the Young*, by F. Awdry (Macmillan, 2s. 6d.); S.P.G. *Historical Sketches*, No. V. *Melanesia* (1½d. post free); *The Island Mission* (out of print, but to be found in *Mission Life* before 1869); and for 37, *Pastoral Work in the Colonies, &c.*, by Bishop J. Selwyn (S.P.C.K., 1s. 9d.).

Answers to be sent to Bog-oak, Industrial School, Andover, by Nov. 1st.

---

JULY CLASS LIST.

CLASS I.

*M.P.*, 39; *Ierne*, *Klondyke*, 32; *Veritas*, 30.

CLASS II.

*Honeysuckle*,<sup>1</sup> 28; *Maiden Aunt*,<sup>1</sup> 15.

<sup>1</sup> Only three answers.

---

REMARKS.

25. *Ierne* and others: Among Japanese races the all but extinct Pit-dwellers, or Kobito, should be remembered. Traces of them remain in the main island and farther north. Also we must have the two distinct forms of the modern Japanese, (1) the aristocratic, (2) the more robust.

26. One member forgets that Xavier begins always with X, and never with Z.

27. Two main edicts of persecution were published. (1) Under Hideyoshi (Taiko-Sama), 1587; worst persecution under this in 1597. (2) Under Ieyasu in 1614. From 1616 persecution ran on till 1638. The Shimabara rebellion in 1637 should be mentioned.

*Honeysuckle*.—Ieyasu was not the son, but the brother-in-law of his predecessor and he was fifty-six, not six, when the Taiko died in 1598.

28. Great uncertainty naturally prevails as to the numbers calling themselves Christian when French missionaries re-entered Japan. Fifty thousand seems improbable. An old missionary from Japan told Bog-oak it was 20,000. Dr. Murray says 4,000, but may only quote those near Nagasaki.

Images of the Infant Buddha in his mother's arms are still shown, which with a little cross scratched on the back, reminded Christian families of the Divine Son and His mother. 'Without priests, without teachers, almost without instruction, they had kept alive by tradition a knowledge of the religion which their ancestors had professed.' It is the most wonderful instance of the vitality of Christianity under almost impossible conditions.

---

PRIZE FOR JANUARY TO JUNE, 1898.

*Life of Bishop Steere* (U.M.C.A.), and *Pastoral Work*, by Bishop J. Selwyn to M.P., Miss Margaret Perceval, Leatherhead Vicarage, Surrey.

## 'MONTHLY PACKET' NOTICES.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The readers of the 'Monthly Packet' are invited to address CHelsea CHINA on any subject the discussion of which occurs to them as likely to interest others, especially in connection with articles appearing in the Magazine.

## CHINA CUPBOARD PRIZES—

*Variety Specimens.* Prize, monthly, 5s.  
*Search Questions (Who, When, and Where).* Prize, for six months taken together, £1 1s.  
*Prose Competition.* Monthly Prize, 5s., or 10s., according to merit.

## RULES for the above—

(1) Papers must be sent by the 25th of each month, addressed to CHelsea CHINA, care of Messrs. A. D. Innes & Co., Limited; they must NOT be addressed to 'the Editors.' (2) Each envelope must be marked *outside* with the subject to which it refers. Papers under separate competitions or discussions must be in separate envelopes. (3) The correspondent's name and address must be written on every paper: the use of a *nom de plume* for the lists is optional. (4) If competitors fail to comply with any rule, their papers will be disqualified. (5) The real name of the prize-winner is published in each case. (6) There are no entrance fees. (7) Prizes cannot be taken by the same person twice in a half-year.

---

[The Editors of the 'Monthly Packet' will feel obliged if All Contributors will write their names and addresses clearly on their MSS., and will enclose stamps for return. Unless these conditions are complied with, the Editors cannot undertake to preserve, return, or enter into correspondence about MSS. Much trouble is saved if accompanying letters are enclosed in the parcel instead of being sent separately.

The utmost care is taken in returning MSS., but the Editors can only hold themselves absolutely responsible for such as are sent to them at their own request.]

# THE MONTHLY PACKET.

## NEW SERIES.

---

NOVEMBER, 1898.

---

### *THE CONQUEST OF LONDON.*

BY DOROTHEA GERARD (MADAME LONGARD DE LONGGARDE),  
AUTHOR OF 'A FORGOTTEN SIN,' 'A SPOTLESS REPUTATION,' 'LADY BABY,' ETC.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

#### ARMING FOR THE FRAY.

IF the immortal part of Uncle Lugdale was in a position to watch the doings of Gilham, and supposing that the immortals have hands to rub, it is not improbable that in these days he was rubbing them hard. Those who knew him best were the slowest to believe in the unmixed benevolence of the intention which stood behind the legacy. He had always been a little cracked, as Philippa said, and he had some reason for looking askance at the quartette of nieces, of whom he knew that they existed somewhere in an out-of-the-way cottage. He had been not only their mother's first cousin, but also her rejected suitor, long before her meeting with Mr. Venning, and long before the idea of taking charge of her forlorn existence had occurred to that gentleman, it had occurred to him. But, curiously enough, the wealthy cousin had not found in her eyes the favour with which the middle-aged painter had subsequently met. Perhaps his eccentricities had frightened her off, or perhaps it was only that she had become less hard to please later on, when years of polite but not less real servitude had done their work. Whichever way it was Mr. Lugdale had never forgiven her his rejection, and even as a

married man with children of his own had continued to bear a grudge to his ungrateful cousin. It was when he felt his end approaching that he remembered the existence of those four unknown nieces, and, half in memory of former days, half in deliberate malice, decided to 'give them a chance.' That at their age and in their unguided position they would make a mess of the chance seemed highly probable, but the thought was no deterrent—quite the contrary. He was convinced that to put money into young people's hands was the surest way of making them lose their heads, and on his very sick-bed he chuckled at the idea of the curse in disguise of a benefit which he had allotted them. Hence his stipulation as to their being given full command of the money. If they had sense enough to keep their heads, so much the better for them; he had no objection to running the risk of doing them good instead of harm, principally because he did not think the risk was great; if they had not the sense, so much the worse; and having added the clause to his will Mr. Lugdale felt as though he had paid off a debt to Fate.

But for all that his memory was being daily blessed at Gilham, where a hundred things were continually proclaiming his munificence. The patterns from Greenfern had arrived, travelling hats had been written for, a flat had been advertised for. The money was announced for the fifteenth, and to-day Miss Amberley, having yielded in some astonishment to a pressing invitation, had arrived on what she supposed was to be a passing visit. 'We have urgent need of your advice,' Philippa had written, perhaps not with unimpeachable truthfulness, since it was her person they required and not in the least her advice, and Miss Amberley, having very rarely been asked for advice and generally having none to give, was proportionately flattered by the appeal, and reluctantly allowed herself to be lured from her snug little town nest.

The idea had been to break the news to her gently and by degrees, not letting her know their actual plans until after a few days, when she had got a little more used to her surroundings. But it was obviously impossible to keep to this programme. The evidences of some great change impending were visible everywhere; the patterns that littered the piano, the tradesmen's letters lying about the room, the very profusion of buttered toast at tea proclaimed that some revolution was in preparation, and more loudly still was it proclaimed by the



four beaming faces, the sparkling eyes, the laughing lips with which she found herself surrounded. To hold one's tongue in face of her bewildered glances of inquiry would have required an expenditure of self-control that could only be called wasteful, and the end of it was that before the last piece of buttered toast was gone she had been put into possession of the outlines of the situation, the details of which were, however, carefully kept from her. It had been agreed, upon reflection, that it was better only to talk in general of an inheritance, which she might suppose as large as she liked, for fear that, knowing exactly how matters stood, she should rouse herself to a determined opposition. She was told that they had become rich—most decidedly rich, that they were determined to go to London—and then they stopped and looked at each other, wondering if it was too early to say more.

To judge from Miss Amberley's expression she had had quite enough for the present. The chronically startled appearance, which had made some one once observe that she looked 'like a white rabbit in a funk,' was used to becoming acute in moments like this. In reality the expression dated only from the period of her first visit to Gilham three years ago, but it had never quite left her face since, having apparently felt too much at home there to retreat, and, in truth, according almost comically well with her rather wide-open, light grey eyes, round face and yellowish white hair, that was parted in the middle of her head and combed smoothly over what used to be known as 'hair rolls'—a species of thin sausage, composed either of horsehair or of stuffed silk or cotton, according to the wealth of the wearer. Miss Amberley's were of cotton filled with wadding, and if they aided in accentuating her likeness to a rabbit, it could only be to one of the lop-eared race. She was a wonderfully well-meaning person, who had never done either any harm or any good to anybody during her life of some fifty odd years—the former through inclination, the latter through want either of opportunity or of energy. Of what she did not know she was a little mistrustful, and as she knew next to nothing beyond the small provincial town in which she was rooted, it resulted that she was a little mistrustful of most things in the world, but in a mild, entirely unaggressive way, as she did all things. In particular was she imbued with the belief that most things

nowadays are shams, and that genuine articles, either in the way of food or of personal character, do not exist within capitals. Another of her peculiarities was that she always had a lot of small luggage about her, such as hymn-books, throat lozenges, shawls, spectacles, knitting-bags, and which moved with her from room to room, whenever she changed her place. They had grown up around her, one by one, these articles; long ago the hymn-book and the knitting-bag had been her only companions; then, as eyesight began to fail, the spectacles had been added; then with increasing sensitiveness to cold had come the shawl and the lozenges. Any one seeing her after an interval generally found some new object added to the collection. To-day the appendages were not yet unpacked, since Miss Amberley was drinking her tea with her bonnet on her head; their want added to the mental trouble with which she received the news poured in upon her.

‘To London!’ she repeated in her most startled tone. ‘But surely that’s madness, girls! Who knows what awful things may happen to you in London? And you could not possibly go alone.’

‘Of course not.’

Every one held their breath and looked at Philippa. Was the moment to speak come?

‘Of course not alone,’ said Philippa steadily; ‘and that is just why—don’t look so frightened, Aunt Susan, it isn’t anything so very dreadful—it is only that we want you to come with us.’

‘Whiskers’ eyes were already so wide open that it was almost physically impossible for them to open wider, but over her face there passed a spasm of pure astonishment. She hastily put down her teacup, obviously for fear of dropping it.

‘I?—to London!—with you?’ she rather gasped than said, after a speechless moment. ‘Not if you were to give me all your money down! London is bad enough, and you are bad enough—but both together!—Gracious Heavens! Do you mean to say that *this* is the business on which you wanted my advice?’

‘Whom else could we ask?’ persisted Philippa. ‘You are our nearest relative, it would not even have been respectful not to apply to you; indeed it almost seems to be your duty to look after us, once we are out of Gilham. After all you were papa’s cousin, you know,’ she added almost severely.

‘But why need you go out of Gilham?’ said Miss Amberley helplessly. ‘You are very comfortable here, I am sure; and it does seem a pity to spend so much at a time, even if there is plenty, instead of taking it thankfully and just making the best of present—’

But her phrase was drowned in a chorus of indignant arguments. With her hands pressed to her ears she only feebly shook her head in reply.

‘No, no,’ she managed at last to make herself heard, ‘I can’t do it. Your wild ways would be the death of me in no time.’

‘But our ways will have to get tame in London,’ urged Cissy.

‘And we’ll dress you so beautifully.’

‘And give you such good things to eat—’

‘But not cooked by ourselves,’ put in Philippa quickly, seeing a new shade of terror on the unhappy ‘Whiskers’ face.

This referred to one of the experiences of Miss Amberley’s first visit, the one, in fact, which had ended by determining her flight. Among the Gilham ‘experiments’ cookery had also taken rank, though only by fits and starts. As a rule no one except Cissy even noticed what they ate, the ‘Child,’ indeed, was frankly greedy, but her primitive cravings were easily satisfied at the village lollipop shop; from time to time, however, and especially in rainy weather, something in the sisters would suddenly rebel against the ‘Newt’s’ repertoire of hashed mutton and rice-pudding. From out of a cookery book, dug from some corner, lists of delicacies which made four mouths water would be read aloud, and it would be unanimously determined that life was not worth living without French pastry and *méringues*. Follow a week or so spent in the kitchen, during which the house became loud with the pounding of sugar, the hissing of fried butter, and occasionally a shriek of pain, and fragrant with the insinuating odour of singed milk. Then after a short course of meals which no one would have dared not to call a success, and after a few fingers had been scalded, a few holes burnt in sleeves, and a good deal of money spent, another occupation was discovered to be urgent, and the republic would thankfully go back to its everyday fare. It had been Miss Amberley’s misfortune to fall right into one of these cookery periods, and the result had been that during the fortnight of her stay her grace before meals had always

been said with a certain uneasy apprehension, while that after meals became a mere empty form, with which gratitude towards Providence had really very little to do ; how was it possible to feel grateful for a soup which no doubt would have been a great success but for the small mistake of the sugar-strewer having been used instead of the salt-box, or for cinders in the shape of cutlets, and garnished with what both looked and tasted like fried leather ? Miss Amberley was most modest in her requirements, but her carefully cooked little meals had a certain importance in her eventless existence, and after those cutlets she left Gilham.

Now, however, it was proved to her by logical deduction that there could be no possible danger of the experience repeating itself. There would be no time for culinary experiments in London, and besides, of course they meant to keep a first-rate cook—possibly a French one.

‘And as for the responsibility,’ explained Philippa, ‘you needn’t be in the least afraid of *that*, for of course we’ll settle everything for ourselves. We only want you to give us the protection of your presence.’

‘We require you as a sort of signal-flag to hang out,’ completed Evelyn ; ‘just in order to show that we belong to the respectable half of the world.’

‘It’s a real pity you were never married,’ was Cissy’s comment. ‘That would have raised your value as a chaperon considerably. I suppose it would be dishonest to invent a husband and pretend you’re a widow ? Because then——’

‘Gracious goodness, what’s that ?’ screamed Miss Amberley at this moment, attempting to gain her feet, but not succeeding, and clutching instead at the two arms of her chair.

The door had opened to admit what was apparently a fox-terrier, only of a rather unusual, grass-green tint.

‘Oh, it’s only Snap,’ said Cissy reassuringly, while Miss Amberley sat staring as though at the apparition of some monster of fable. ‘We had so much of the Mayblossom Soap over that I thought this was the best way of using it up, and it would have been wicked wastefulness, of course *not*, to use it up. There’s a purple dog somewhere about the place, and also an orange one, and a few that are more nondescript, so please don’t get a fit if you meet them. But, don’t think of the dogs now ; think of what a chance you’re going to have of seeing the world !’

'You can't imagine how nice you'll look in black velvet, auntie,' Evelyn now took up the argument, 'and a lace coiffure, and perhaps a diamond star. What do you think, Philippa?'

'Certainly a diamond star. *Our* chaperon must cut a dash.'

'And we'll buy you a much better shawl than your old one.'

'And Jabberwack shall carry your hymn-book after you from room to room,' said Cissy. 'He carries beautifully.'

Miss Amberley shuddered silently at this last suggestion.

'Oh, auntie dear, *do* say yes!'

'I—I must sleep over it,' said the old maid faintly, feeling as though a net were closing around her.

Sleeping over it did not do much good, however. Next morning she still struggled feebly indeed, but she already felt herself lost.

'I have no notion how people go on at parties,' she almost tearfully pleaded.

Soothing reassurances met her. They would teach her everything. The fact of their knowing as little of the matter as she did did not suffice to shake their robust self-confidence; if the circumstance as much as occurred to them it was left 'to fate,' together with other things.

'And never a drop of decent milk!' she sighed next; 'and nothing but imitation butter—margarine, or whatever they call the stuff.' Miss Amberley was of opinion that one would be much more likely to find diamonds in the streets of London than real butter in any of its shops. 'And then the late hours! I shouldn't be surprised if I had to sit up till past midnight at times.' For thirty years past Miss Amberley had gone to bed at 10 p.m.

'Yes; but you may be sitting with a duchess on one side and a marchioness on the other,' explained Evelyn consolingly.

But there was no spark either of ambition or of vanity in Miss Amberley's composition. If she yielded at last it was not because she was dazzled by the black velvet, or even by the diamond star, nor because she rejoiced at the idea of a duchess's vicinity, but simply because she was no match for the four wills, each one of which was stronger than her own. The sacrifice she was bringing was a very real sacrifice. In her life Order and Method stood in the place of happiness, and for years past she had been used to an unlimited supply of quiet. She had been kind-hearted enough to make the

former attempt, and yet selfish enough to rejoice at its failure. And this was going to be a much worse experience than the first.

It would only be on trial, as she carefully explained. She was rewarded by effusive caresses and endless promises, but those first days were, nevertheless, rich in shocks to her unsettled nerves. Despite Cissy's warning, both the purple and the orange dogs gave her 'a turn' each time she met them on the staircase, and these were not by any means the worst, for the experiments had not been confined to the white animals, and the effects of cerise and heliotrope on black and brown coats was often gruesome in the extreme. Then there were cases in which odds and ends of Mayblossom Soap had been combined, and however hard she might try, Miss Amberley could not arrive at feeling quite at home in the same room with a black, scarlet-spotted imp, nor could she get used to seeing a sky-blue poodle wagging a terra-cotta tail, and offering a canary-coloured paw.

But it was not only through her eyes, it was also through her ears that the mental shocks were conveyed. The slight acquaintance with the family vocabulary, gained three years ago, had quite faded from her memory, and she had to learn all over again that exclamations were not always to be taken at their apparent worth, that when, for instance, some one burst into the room with the words, 'Misery,' or 'Agony,' this did not necessarily mean that a calamity had occurred, but was just as likely to refer to a torn skirt or a lost dog-collar, just as the announcement of 'Wild joy !' was not bound to apply to anything more sensational than the finding of that same dog-collar.

'You see, it saves so much trouble and so much time,' Cissy explained, 'if one has a fixed set of expressions of which every one knows the exact value ; it's as good as a code of telegraphic signals. Life really is too short for all these elaborate explanations which people go in for. Cissy was always finding life too short for everything, which was curious seeing what a small bit of it she had behind her. 'There's nothing like putting things into nutshells. Now when we're going to make a particularly big mess in the studio, and the Captain tells us we had better make ourselves "Great Pig," we all know exactly what that means, simply that we're to put on the very oldest and worst things we have, something that

can't possibly be made worse than it is by either putty or glue or sealing-wax, just as for out of doors we have got our mud petticoats. Then, again, there's the word "Idiots"; it's an awfully useful word. Do you know the difference between an "idiot" and a "born idiot," Aunt Susan?

'I—I'm afraid not.'

'Well, an "idiot" doesn't mean anything bad at all; everybody is an idiot at times—it's a temporary state, so to say; while, when once we've pronounced a person to be a "born idiot," that means that the case is hopeless—that he's just been made so from the beginning, and can't help himself. Do you see?'

'I—rather, not quite.'

'You'll learn in time,' said Cissy encouragingly. 'Do you know what a "dust-in-the-eyes person" means? No? Just somebody who tries to make you believe that he is something which he isn't. We've long ago decided, for instance, that both Aggie and Maggie Wheeler are "dust in the eyes." One could preach a sermon on each of them separately, but "dust in the eyes" does just as well. You can't imagine what a fraud Aggie is! Now, one day when we had driven over there with the "Hottentot"——'

'The "Hottentot," my dear!' said Miss Amberley, opening her eyes a little wider.

'Yes, the boy who drives the donkey-cart. We call him the "Hottentot" because he's the nearest approach to one we know, just as we call Fanny the "Newt," because her body is as long as her legs. It's her photograph in one word.'

But Miss Amberley heard little of the story that was to prove Aggie Wheeler a fraud, being occupied in guarding her shawl against Spangles, to whose youthful mind the dangling fringes evidently presented insurmountable temptations. Spangles' unformed character made him Miss Amberley's most personal enemy. He had already once eaten all the throat lozenges which his own impetuosity had knocked off the table, and although Cissy declared that he barked twice as beautifully afterwards, the compliment paid to her favourite physic had not sufficed to console Miss Amberley.

Would she ever get accustomed to hearing people called by these heathen appellations? she now asked herself. At the first mention of the 'Newt' she had looked round nervously,

as though expecting to see a small animal scuttling over the carpet, and the 'Hottentot' was just as apt to awake alarming visions. But Miss Amberley had graver ambitions than this. She had already written off in secret for the 'Manners and Customs of Good Society,' and after its arrival meant to study it surreptitiously.

None of her doubts seemed to afflict her nieces. On the contrary, as the period of departure drew nearer, their confidence seemed to be growing. They had talked themselves into the belief that something great was in store, not only for them, but also for London. It seemed to them impossible that their appearance there should not bring society into commotion. By dint of dwelling on the pictures in their brain they had come to find it quite natural that London should fall at their feet. Not oppressed by any false modesty with regard to their looks, they discussed the question with a frankness which put all Miss Amberley's ideas of what was 'nice' upside down.

'I don't see how we can help making a sensation,' argued Philippa for the fiftieth time. 'It isn't every day that four sisters march up abreast, and with all that money too to spend. They will *have* to look at us, and if once they look I think they'll be satisfied.'

'Unless they look at me separately,' remarked Evelyn. 'But they're much more likely to take us in a lump, and I don't think I'll spoil the effect that way.'

Amidst talks like these the days flew past, spring came into the land, the once so gorgeous dogs grew dingier day by day, until under the combined influence of time and mud they had turned into ghastly spectres of their former splendour, and at last the great moment was close at hand. All preliminaries were settled. A furnished flat in an excellent position had been taken; a cook and a housemaid with brilliant testimonials and proportionate wages had been engaged; the Greenfern dresses had arrived; the bulk of the money had, at Philippa's request, been paid direct to a London bank. She would feel ever so much happier if she had not to trouble her head about anything but drawing it when required. One thing still remained, the choice of a dog as companion. To keep seven mongrels of all sorts and sizes and habits in a town lodging was acknowledged as unfeasible, but to live quite without a dog, even in London, seemed at least equally impossible.



Selection, however, was rendered very difficult by the fact that all the seven possessed their mistresses' hearts almost equally, while none of them owned the qualifications most desirable for town life. Spangles, owing to his youth, was perhaps the momentary favourite, but alas, he was also the most devoid of those necessary virtues, having not yet succeeded in acquiring even the rudiments of self-control. Jabberwack stood next in affection, but personal appearance was here the drawback. The person out of the exchange column of the *Lady's Star* who had made those sarcastic remarks about his pedigree was perhaps not so very far wrong after all, for he could not be said to have developed into what is generally understood by a 'well-bred' collie. Snap was too uncertain in temper, and Bismarck, the poodle, would require too much attention to his toilet. After many doubts the choice fell at last upon a small, yellow terrier bitch, somewhat blasphemously known as 'Ophelia,' who, on the whole, appeared to assemble in her person the greatest number of the desired attributes. It was not personal appearance that had influenced the decision here either, for to say the truth the word 'terrier' is used principally by courtesy. It would be more correct to say that, in defiance of her name, Ophelia was a nondescript quadruped of more than middle age, whose ears had been in her puppyhood cruelly mutilated by some blundering scissors, and who joined in her appearance something of the monkey to something of the frog. She had been Cissy's plaything while that young lady was still in the nursery, and had kept the expression of deep and rather blunt resignation that had been acquired during long processes of being dressed up like a doll, or driven in toy carts. Several times already her life had been in danger from over-feeding. A severe banting cure had on one of these occasions averted the danger, and at the same time added to the grotesqueness of her appearance, for the heavy, yellow folds that had once been comfortably padded, now lay loose and unoccupied round her neck, very much after the fashion of either a lion's mane or a fur boa. She was too small to take up any room and too heavy to jump on to sofas, both of which could only be considered as advantages. As for the rest, she was staid in her habits, and as thankful for peace as Whiskers herself, except in those moments when she was visited by a spark of her vanished youthfulness and by an *idée fixe* that every stranger was a

felon. In those moments she sometimes mistook herself for a tiger. A new collar and a warm bath, which successfully removed the last traces of Mayblossom Soap, were the first results of Ophelia's promotion. The less fortunate animals were to be left in charge of Fanny, who, in the character of a caretaker, was to look after both them and the cottage.

The spring sunshine was pouring on the face of the little stone house when the day came for its four inhabitants to take their last look at it. On the step stood the 'Newt' in tears and the new blue and red checked dress which had been her mistresses' parting gift, while in the fly Miss Amberley sat with the feelings of a condemned criminal. As long as the house was still visible, and the howls of the six dogs locked up in the lobby still audible, there was, despite the triumph of the moment, a slightly choky feeling in several throats; but once out of sight and out of hearing—with only the spring sunshine streaming over the downs and the dewdrops twinkling on the young grass-blades, and the birds flapping their wings on the top of the thorn bushes, the four hearts leaped up with all the vehemence of reaction.

At that moment they felt ready to undertake the conquest not only of London but even of the world.

## CHAPTER V.

### OPENING THE CAMPAIGN.

A LARGE, handsome, comfortably furnished room, with a piano at one end, a good deal of drapery and a profusion of cut flowers on all the tables, and with an elderly and three young persons disposed about it in various, principally idle, attitudes, while a small yellow dog basked before the fire, with that peculiar inelasticity of paw and laxity of hip which expresses the supremest canine enjoyment.

A whole week had passed since the departure from Gilham, but the dazed and dazzled sensation, that mental giddiness which the first roar of the capital engenders in country-bred brains, had scarcely begun to disperse. Despite it, or perhaps because of it, more had been done in this week than at first sight appeared possible in a week. Besides getting settled in their very comfortable apartment they had managed to buy a

lot of things to wear, and a lot of things to eat, and more things still to beautify their rooms with, not so much because they did not find them comfortable enough already, but because the flower vases and rugs and art curtains which the shop windows were on all sides thrusting under their eyes were too entirely irresistible to be passed by. Almost everything they saw appeared irresistible, and most of all the flowers, with which, to their astonishment, they found themselves surrounded, yes, even pursued on to the very pavement. Whatever they had expected to find in London, it certainly was not flowers. Hyacinths and lily of the valley were not associated in their minds with brick and mortar, and as for roses in March, they had never even heard of the thing. To find them blooming right and left at a time when the country, which they had always supposed to be the natural home of flowers, had scarcely got beyond snowdrops and anemones, was indeed a revelation, but one which they accepted more easily than Miss Amberley, who sniffed as mistrustfully at each bunch of 'town violets' as she did at her breakfast egg, as suspicious evidently of the genuineness of the one as of the other.

But in this week they had done more than merely spend money. They had seen so many wonders that time to discuss them had hitherto failed. They had been to the Park and had seen lots of people on bicycles and lots of people off them, they had tasted the alarming delight of Bond Street crossings, had been to see a problem play, of which they never even discovered that there was a problem in it; had visited several picture galleries, and finally had called on the only people they knew in London, and on whom depended all their future hopes. These were the Wheelers, who, by a slight stretching of the term, might be called country neighbours, and who went to town as regularly as clockwork every year, that is to say, since Aggie and Maggie were grown up—but that was some time ago. In spirit the sisters had revelled often in the astonishment which their unheralded appearance and altered fortunes would produce on these somewhat distant acquaintances, and the reality had not belied the vision. In evidently boundless astonishment, mixed as yet with a little reserve, Mrs. Wheeler had promised to 'see what she could do' in the matter of further introductions and of invitations to be procured.

For the moment this was all that could be done. There

remained nothing but to sit and wait for the first invitation and to practice their waltz steps diligently. London, unaware of the plot within its walls, went on its way meanwhile, unconcerned, its peace not so much as ruffled by the threatened attack. For the waiters it was something like the pause on the edge of the pool before taking the final plunge into its seething waters. As yet they were out of it, but soon the first wave would have seized them. It was that first wave they were waiting for now, impatiently, and yet perhaps with a dim feeling that after a week of fever and with so much undigested astonishment about them the pause was almost a respite.

Their very attitudes betrayed the sense of expectation. Miss Amberley alone was busy with her perennial stocking. In this week the old maid's appearance had undergone a considerable modification. Instead of her old cashmere, the folds of an orthodox black silk billowed stiffly around her—black silk had seemed to the sisters to be 'the real, respectable thing'—while a black lace coiffure crowned the newly stuffed hair rolls. Her luggage was about her as of old, but it too had during this week greatly improved in quality; the shawl was no longer of worsted, but of the finest Pyrenean wool; the work-bag, once an ordinary cloth pouch, had turned into a red plush reticule; the throat lozenges were enclosed in a Louis Quinze bonbonnière; even the hymn-book had been rebound in stamped leather. But despite it all Miss Amberley felt supremely uncomfortable, continually on the alert, after the fashion of a rabbit in a cabbage field, whose ever-working ears and nostrils are flaring danger. For herself she would have been content to remain for ever on the edge of the pool, and it is probable that Ophelia shared these sentiments. The yellow terrier had begun by being in one of her most tiger-like moods, but after a few attempts to clear the Park of what she considered to be unwarranted intruders had given it up in disgust, and, allowing her years to claim her, had sunk back from momentarily revived youth to middle-aged apathy. Even the ignominy of a string and muzzle were submitted to with that dull resignation acquired in early years. Of the thickness of the carpet, on the other hand, Ophelia greatly approved, as well as of the profusion of cream, and in this differed from Miss Amberley, who submitted every mouthful she ate to a piercing examination, and could not be persuaded that the

stuff 'she was given to her tea' contained any ingredients beyond chalk and water.

Of the other three people in the room only Philippa had an appearance of occupation, but it is probable that she did not see much of the illustrated journal whose pages she was idly turning over. Adela, with her elbow on the table, was idly plunging her fingers into a great bowl of daffodils, her eyes sunk in their golden chalices, while Cissy, transformed by long skirts, but not quite able to break with old habits, sat on a footstool with hands clasped round her knees, frankly doing nothing. Evelyn had gone out immediately after breakfast to take another look at a picture in the Grosvenor Gallery which had struck her fancy. Even the roar of London had not been able quite to stifle the artist's voice within her.

Of the four sisters it was perhaps Adela who as yet was most fully tasting the delights of the change. It was only now when finding herself thus suddenly surrounded with comfort and beauty in the most everyday details, that she discovered how much she had really suffered from her former poverty, and more especially from its prosaic side. The beauty of the family had always had an innate dislike to common things and common sights, a secret yearning towards the ornamental side of life, that was almost more fastidious than artistic and under which she had suffered more than the far more artistically inclined but more mentally robust Evelyn. For it is the privilege of the artist to find beauty in the most unlikely things, whereas to the merely fastidious person the frame is almost as important as the picture itself. It was now only that the propensity, hitherto well kept down by the wholesome mockery of her sisters, had the chance of expanding.

Suddenly through the hearts of the waiters there passed an electric shock, caused by the sharp echo of the door bell. There were four distinct starts—exactly as many as people in the room—for it was impossible to say what a ring might mean in London.

'It's only Evelyn,' said Cissy, having intently lent an ear.

It was only Evelyn, but Evelyn with shining eyes and glowing cheeks.

'The Wheelers !' she announced breathlessly. 'I just caught sight of them turning into the street, they'll be here in a minute. Quick, Aunt Susan, put away your stocking and take your

embroidery. Who knows whether they aren't bringing that invitation they talked about !'

Miss Amberley had only just time to hide away her beloved stocking, and to arm herself with the strip of art embroidery, with which she felt herself wholly out of sympathy, but which had been prescribed for visits, and Cissy to adopt a more dignified attitude, when Mrs. and the Misses Wheeler were announced, and had immediately to be defended against the wrath of Ophelia, to whom morning visitors were too unknown not to be supremely suspicious.

Mrs. Wheeler was large and loud, and of a generally aggressive personality, requiring much room to place herself, much space to move and also to speak in, for her metallic voice gave the impression of beating against the walls of the room. In a limited lodging she must have been overpowering. She possessed to perfection the art of staring, of never reddening, and also of making the most direct remarks in the most matter-of-fact way. Her two daughters, Aggie and Maggie, were as different from her as from each other. With their fifth or sixth season behind them they had arrived at the age when it is generally found advisable to be not oneself alone, but if possible somebody else also—in other words, to adopt a *pose*. Whether unconsciously or by mutual arrangement the two *poses* selected were of the most opposite nature, well calculated therefore to act as contrasts. The idea was very simple—one was the bright sister, the other the thoughtful one ; the one mechanically gay, the other artificially serious. If the Miss Wheelers could have been suspected of cultivating Milton it might have been supposed that they had taken their cues from the 'Penseroso' and the 'Allegro,' the *rôles* having been allotted, not according to inclination, but more with regard to complexion and features, for while the dark-eyed Aggie seemed to have selected for motto—

'Hence vain, deluding joys !'

and to sigh only for solitude, the red-cheeked Maggie seemed equally anxious to keep 'loathed melancholy' at arm's length. The brightness of the younger sister's spirits was so uniform as to be occasionally fatiguing ; the gaiety which is instinctively felt to be without joyousness cannot exhilarate, just as the smile without sweetness can never enchant. Something of this

consciousness it was, no doubt, that had caused them to be ranged at Gilham in the great class of 'dust in the eyes.'

'Well, you *have* made yourselves comfortable !' was Mrs. Wheeler's exclamation, as, before even shaking hands all round, she stood still and gave a comprehensive stare round the room. 'Such a lot of flowers, and a brand-new piano, and those embroidered curtains ! I know they cost five guineas a pair, because I priced them myself the other day. This is a difference from Gilham ! Whoever would have thought to find you set up in Arthur Street, to be sure !'

The formal presentation of Miss Amberley, who received as comprehensive a stare as the room, here diverted her attention.

'Your aunt ! This is the first I hear of your having an aunt ! Where did you take her from ?'

'She is papa's cousin,' said Philippa, a little stiffly ; 'and she brought us up to town last week.'

Miss Amberley sighed, and over the top of her spectacles seemed to be appealing to the ceiling to witness that the passive tense was the only appropriate one in the verb that had just been employed.

'She will go with us everywhere, of course,' Philippa hastened to explain. 'That is—oh, Mrs. Wheeler,' she burst out, throwing dignity to the winds, 'have you kept your promise about the invitation ?' It was impossible to engage in any further conversation until that burning point was settled.

The answer jerked out, in the intervals of heavily settling into a chair, came like a deliverance to the expectant room.

'That's just what I've come about. Yes, I've got you the invitation. You've only got to drop cards, and it'll be all right.'

'To a dance ?' asked all four together.

'Yes, to a dance. It wasn't quite an easy thing to do. Four girls in a lump is rather a big mouthful for a hostess in these days of non-dancing men. But you see I managed.' And she stared round ready for gratitude.

'Oh, how good of you ! And when ?'

'Saturday.'

This was Tuesday. They looked at each other in sudden alarm.

'I suppose we can get dresses before Saturday,' Philippa said quickly. 'We haven't ordered them yet.'

‘If you pay for them accordingly, no doubt,’ said the visitor, with an abrupt laugh. ‘But there evidently won’t be any difficulty about that.’ And she took another look around her.

‘And whom are we to drop the cards on?’

‘On the Thursbys. Mrs. Thursby is an old friend of mine, and we never miss her dances.’

A very slight chill passed over the listeners. So it was only at a Mrs. Thursby’s, not at a duchess’s or even a countess’s house that they were going to make their *début*. From the general gist of the remarks dropped by the Wheelers in their country life the Vennings had somehow gathered the impression that there were far more titled than untitled people among their friends’ acquaintance. But the chill passed as quickly as it had come. They were going to a dance on Saturday, and that was quite enough.

Presently the company began to fall into little groups. Adela and Evelyn took possession of Aggie, who was apparently lost in contemplation of a pot of hyacinths, while Maggie, under pretext of admiring an Oriental screen, dragged Cissy off to the further end of the room, and Miss Amberley attempted desperately to entertain the chief visitor, but, despite Philippa’s assistance, was not able to get beyond the deplorable quality of the butter and the wretchedness of the fabrics that are nowadays sold as pure flannel.

‘Of course you’ll be there too?’ Evelyn and Adela were saying excitedly to Aggie.

‘I suppose so,’ replied Aggie, with downcast eyes and an artistically stifled sigh.

‘And aren’t you wild with joy?’

‘Wild with joy?’ Aggie raised her dark eyes as wonderingly as though she had been Miss Amberley herself. Both the expression and the idea appeared equally new to her. ‘I don’t think I ever could be wild with anything,—certainly not with joy, and certainly not about a dance. They’re so awfully like each other, you know, and I’ve been to so many!’

‘Then why do you go?’ asked Evelyn bluntly.

‘One has to bring sacrifices,’ she explained with the smile of a martyr. ‘And besides, it would be foolish not to wear a new dress when one has it.’

Cissy, meanwhile, was having far better sport with Maggie at the other end of the room.

‘You can’t imagine what a turn it gave me to see you in long



frocks,' the 'Allegro' young lady was confidentially saying. It does seem so sudden, and somehow I fancied you'd only been fifteen your last birthday.'

'What you may have fancied surely has nothing to do with it,' answered Cissy with dignity. 'And besides, height is ever so much more important than years nowadays.'

'Of course,' Maggie readily agreed. 'And you can't imagine how glad I am to think we'll be going out together. I always thought you were a trump, Cis. I'm sure you often noticed my sympathy. We're going to have such fun together!' and she laughed profusely, though there didn't seem anything particular to laugh about.

Cissy's pale blue eyes looked rather like brightly polished stones as she returned the gaze. Although she ought to have been in the schoolroom she had the most undeniable talent for flaring anything that was not perfectly genuine.

'Of course I mean to have lots of fun,' she agreed reservedly.

'With all that money to spend it oughtn't to be difficult. Look here, Cis'—and the voice became more naïvely confidential—'I'm just dying to know all about it. It was an uncle, wasn't it, who left it you?'

'Yes, Uncle Lugdale.'

'A millionaire, wasn't he? Uncles always are millionaires,' with the obligatory laugh.

'Ah, so that is the way the wind blows,' reflected Cissy, who seemed to have discovered a reason for this sudden sympathy.

'Of course he was a millionaire—several times over,' she asserted, as unflinchingly as though she had not been obliged to draw slightly on her imagination for the fact.

'Ah!' Maggie's chair moved a little nearer as the needle moves to the magnet. 'But he did not leave it all to you, did he? I always imagined he was married.'

'No, he did not leave it *all* to us,' said Cissy as mysteriously as she could, and beginning to enter into the spirit of what she considered to be a most excellent joke. 'But he left a good deal. Four thousand pounds isn't a bad sort of sum to spend, is it?'

'A year?' Maggie asked quickly, for indeed she was consumed with inward curiosity.

'Well, why not a year?' grinned Cissy, in increasing enjoyment of the effect she was producing, while, with what might be described as a mental grin, she inwardly added: 'Wouldn't

you just like to know, you 'dust-in-the-eyes thing?' Mind, I don't say that is the exact figure of our income, but I only put it in the abstract to you whether four thousand pounds isn't a nice little sum to spend?'

'A delightful sum!' Maggie was getting a little flurried. 'But I suppose the legacies were separate? Surely you don't mean that each of you——'

'Of course I do; we're quite independent of each other, since we each got our own. You can count on your fingers what that comes to. It is quite an easy sum to do.'

'If she is such an idiot as to believe me, then so much the worse for her,' was the accompanying reflection.

'Then I suppose you will quite give up Gilham?' the other remarked, a little awestricken, after some more minutes of rather bewildering conversation. 'You're sure to want a larger place.'

'We haven't considered that point yet,' said Cissy airily. 'As yet we think only of thoroughly enjoying our season.'

'You will keep a carriage, I suppose? Why, I shouldn't be surprised if you were to give a ball!'

'I shouldn't be surprised myself.'

'Of course you will never forget your old friends,' said Maggie fervently. 'There is mamma going already, just as we were beginning to talk comfortably. Dear Cissy, it *will* be jolly to see you on Saturday!' And with a spasmodic embrace and a final peal of laughter she took her leave.

The door was not well closed behind the visitors when Cissy was entertaining the company with her method of baffling undue curiosity.

Meanwhile, as the brougham turned from the door, Mrs. Wheeler was asking sharply: 'Have you found out anything?'

'Lots,' said Maggie. 'It is quite evident that the inheritance has been a really big thing. As far as I can make out they have each got something like four thousand a year—that gives them at present an income of sixteen thousand to spend. That old uncle must have been a real Croesus.'

She said it without a laugh this time. In private neither the 'Allegro' nor the 'Penseroso' sister found it necessary rigorously to carry out their rôles, witness this omitted laugh, as well as the animation with which the dark-eyed sister now took part in the discussion.

'We must arrange a dinner-party for them at once, mamma,' she urged.

'Yes, and I must say I am *very* glad now that I managed those invitations. They mustn't be allowed to forget that it was *we* who gave them their first push. Who knows what may be the uses of this ! I have always thought them good-natured, and a hundred pounds now and then could make no difference to them now, and there's that bill of Pelliman's turned up for the third time already !' A noisy sigh accompanied the words. 'Yes, we certainly must keep up with them.'

(*To be continued.*)

*SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS AND  
VERSES OF THE POET SOMERVILE.*

---

ONCE upon a time—a time not so very long ago—authors and authoresses shone as brilliant constellations from their lofty firmament ; they held their own Court of Genius, kings and princes, nobles and wise men all bowed down and paid them homage. The day of lesser lights, of which the literary sky is now so crowded, was unheard of.

One of these great stars, William Somervile, came into existence on September 2, 1675, not in the beautiful county of Warwickshire, which afterwards he made his home, but in his grandfather's house at Wolsely, in Staffordshire.

Speaking of himself once, he modestly said "he was a squire well born." His ancestor, Sir Gaultier de Somervile, came over with the Conqueror and acquired the lands of Wichnor, in Staffordshire. He left two sons, Walter, the elder, from whom sprang the Somerviles of Wichnor, and Aston Somervile, and Edstone, the home of the poet ; and William, the younger son, who settled in Scotland, and from whom descended the long line of Baron Somerviles.

Gilbert, the eighth Lord Somervile, royally entertained King James the Sixth at Cowthally, which the king laughingly styled 'Cow-daily,' as he observed during his visit that one cow and ten sheep were killed there daily.

The last and seventeenth Lord Somervile died in 1870, and by the great kindness of his daughter, the Hon. Mrs. Ralph Smyth, a great bundle of unpublished letters and MSS. was put the other day into the hands of the present writer. The thin yellow sheets, with the faded upright writing, was like a hand stretching over these hundred years and more of time, introducing one to a celebrated company.

Here was Lord Lyttleton, Lady Luxborough (Lord Bolingbroke's half-sister), Mr. Shenstone, Jago, and as we read a host of stars appear and shine on us from afar from the horizon of Fame.

Among the letters written to Lord Somerville are some curious scraps which may interest the readers of to-day; they have never been out of the Somerville family before. Here is

#### A SOUVERIGN PLAISTER

To dispell and alloy any Inflammation or Swelling, that can possibly arise betwixt ministers of the Gospel of any different Perswasions.

In a letter to a Friend :

Tho' well you advise in y<sup>e</sup> last, Sir,  
To musell the Priest and y<sup>e</sup> Vicar  
I think I have found out a plaister  
Will do it much better and quicker.

Viz :

Take Monastery Dust, if old Harry  
Left any behind in his zeal,  
With a Brand from his good Daughter Mary,  
Beat small by a Protestant Flail.

In Oyl of Charity blend them,  
With zeal mix a Dram more or less,  
Add the scrapings, 'twill mightily mend 'em,  
Of Penal Laws made by Queen Bess.

Spread the mixture upon a Scotch Boot,  
With a knife of St. Bartholmews Day.  
Or, these should you miss one to do 't,  
Take a Durk from the Irish Fray,  
One warm'd by fair Amity's Fire,  
'Twill Let each clap a piece to his Heart,  
'Twill cause the Effect you desire,

Or else I have failed in my Art ;  
But should after all the Division  
Continue with Strife and ill breeding,  
Let one try a Pope's Inquisition  
And 'tother a Razor in Sweeden.

Probatum est :

H. F. M. D.

Later on the Strollers were evidently at Stratford, and the poet in his beautiful home at Edstone, hard by, was asked to write this Prologue for them.

## PROLOGUE FOR THE STROLERS AT STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

We, to this place where Shakespeare dwelt of old,  
 On foot, on horseback, or in carts have strol'd ;  
 Great ' Bard ' ! look down and view thy batter'd Place,  
 Crowns on their heads and famine in their face.  
 Like other Kings on subsidy we live,  
 Princes must starve unless their subjects give ;  
 The times are hard, it cannot be denied,  
 Madam's tea Equipage must be supplied,  
 Her damask gown she will on Sunday wear,  
 Tho' all her squaling children live on air ;  
 We shall not therefore make a large Demand,  
 Nor pinch with Taxes an exhausted Land.  
 Our Estimates we'll fairly lay before ye,  
 Act for the Peoples Good, the Monarchs Glory ;  
 Our Civil List we hope you'll freely pay,  
 Or else—we'll bilk your Town, and run away.  
 The Treatise we Conclude, the Wars we wage,  
 Are all within the Company of this Stage.

Something for Secret Service must be done,  
 Our Maids of Honour are not cheaply won.  
 I'll give my word their Pensions shant exceed,  
 What pays the Hessian or what fees the Swede ;  
 Be kind this Night each honest Score we'll quit,  
 And give for sterling Money, Stirling Wit.

The following Conference shows a humour which could smile to-day as brightly as it did on the long past yesterday.

## A CONFERENCE BETWEEN A PRESBYT. PREACHER AND A FAMILY OF HIS FLOCK. Jan. 30th.

*Preacher.*

Good morrow to ye, How dos't do ?  
 I only called in to show  
 My Love upon this Blessed day,  
 As I, by chance, came by this way,  
 Grace, Peace, and Faith be unto thee  
 And all this Chosen Family.

*Husband.*

My Soul doeth very much rejoice  
 To see thee & to hear thy voice,  
 I bless the Lord to find thee thus  
 Abound in Health as well as us,  
 And hope thou ar't disposed to stay  
 A while & comfort us this day.

*Preacher.*

I think I shall not stay to dine,  
But the Lord's Will be done not mine.  
Where is thy Good Wife? Methinks I want  
To see her, this a precious Saint,  
In Wedlock thou art truly blest,  
Of Woman she 'is the very best,  
Pray let her know that I am here,  
And tell her I desire to see her;  
The Lord Preserve her, here she comes.

*Husband.*

She's just been sweeping out her Rooms,  
You must exempt her Huswife dress.

*Preacher.*

She's always doing I Profess.

*Wife.*

I'm very happy, worthy Sir,  
To see so Great a Stranger here,  
I hope Good Madam Cant is well  
And Pretty Mrs. Abigail.  
Dear Sir, I wish I could have seen  
Them here, How blest should I have been,  
Tho' I'm ashamed I must Confess  
T' appear in such a homely dress.

*Preacher.*

Thow'r't a Good Woman, Thou hast Grace  
That best adorns a beauteous Face.  
I think thy Weeds become thee well,  
Thou would not dress like Gezabel,  
To tell the Truth I've seldom seen  
A Wife more Lovely or more Clean;  
Give me thy Hand, Thou faithful Bride,  
The Lord at all times be thy Guide;  
How do thy little Comforts fare?  
Those tender twigs, their Parents' care;  
Pray call them hither, let me bless  
Those pretty, healthful Babes of Grace.

*Wife.*

Here, Aram, come, my little Saint,  
Where's your low bow to Mr. Cant?  
Daughter, where art? Come hither, Ruth,  
Fie! pull your fingers from your mouth,  
Look up, my dear, hold up your head,  
Where's your fine Curtsey? That's my Maid.

*Preacher.*

Lord Sanctifie these Lambs, and Grant  
 That they thy Grace may never want ;  
 Shew them thy ways, that they may be  
 A Comfort to thy Spouse and thee.  
 The Lord sufficiently hath showed  
 His Love to both in such a Brood ;  
 May they still greater Blessings grow  
 To thee that brought them forth in woe,  
 And as their years increase, inherit  
 A Double portion of thy Spirit.

*Wife.*

Thanks to you, Revd. Sir, may Heaven  
 Reward the blessing you have given.  
 Rebecca, take my Closet Key,  
 And fetch the Bottle unto me  
 Thy master brought me home last night  
 For Palm, and said he knew 'twas right,  
 And with the bottle, pray bring me  
 A glass, and wash it very clean.

*Preacher.*

I hope thou dost not think that I  
 Drink wine, Except I'm sick or Dye ;  
 I ne'er take anything that's strong ;  
 One Glass, I fear, will do me wrong.  
 E'en let it rest upon the shelf,  
 Thou'dst better keep it for thyself.

*Wife.*

Good Sir, Vouchsafe at my request  
 To drink this Glass ; it's but a Taste,  
 It holds but half a Pint at most :  
 Will thou be pleased to have a toast ?

*Preacher.*

No, by no means ; if I must take  
 So large a Dose, 'tis for thy Sake,  
 Good Lord, Give thou a Blessing to it,  
 That when 'tis down I may not rue it.  
 Well, it's exceeding Good indeed,  
 I wish it mayn't offend my Head.  
 May'st thou att all times for thy care  
 Abound in Comfort such as these :  
 'Tis a Prime Cordial, I Protest  
 This ought not to be drunk in Waste.



*Husband.*

Alas, one Glass will not harm you,  
I am sure a second can't harm you ;  
Cold weather does strong wine require ;  
Fill out, my dear, a little Higher ;  
Pray give the Glass to Mr. Cant,  
So long a walk may make him faint.

*Preacher.*

Thou best of all Good Woman, hold  
Thy Hand ; Consider, I am old,  
Thou art too bountiful I vow,  
Thy love is too abounding now.  
Lord, Sanctifie this Cordial Juice,  
And make it wholesome for our use ;  
Well, it's a comfortable—  
In truth I think I ne'er drank better ;  
I can't but thank you for your Love,  
'Tis now I doubt High time to move.

*Wife.*

Pray, Sir, I hope you'll stay to dine ;  
Besides, Here's almost half the Wine ;  
Pray, Sir, accept before you go,  
Of t'other glass, and don't say no.  
And, if you're not engaged elsewhere,  
You're welcome to our homely fare.

*Preacher.*

Thou art so kind, I needs must say  
I scarce know how to go away.  
What Dinner hast thou, friendly Creature ;  
Alas ! I'm but a \* eater.

*Wife.*

I must Confess we have not dressed  
What's worthy of so Good a Guest,  
Yet 'tis a Dish that we may say  
'Tis \* to the present Day.  
'Tis a Calf's Head to tell you Truth,  
I wish such fare may fitt your Sooth.

*Preacher.*

Bless me, the best and only dish  
Upon this day that I would wish.  
No food besides could so delight  
My eyes and eke my appetite.  
Good, pious Saints, that you should joyn  
Your hearts so mutually with mine ;  
Well, give me now the other glass ;

I see that you abound in Grace.  
 The Lord of Mercy and of Power  
 Hath blessings for such Saints in Store ;  
 I cannot bid you now farewell,  
 Thy Invitation must prevail,  
 Methinks from Heaven I hear a voice  
 That bids me tarry and Rejoice.

Among the many letters belonging to the poet, this curious account of Deval, written by Sir Thomas Overbury, was found, and we think it too interesting not to give it a place here:—

*'To my Honoured Cousin William Somerville, Esq., at Edston.*

'SIR.—I am very sorry to hear of y<sup>e</sup> continuance of your indisposition, but hope y<sup>e</sup> Sons return will restore to you your health : I have for these six weeks past layed under a severe fitt of Gout, from which I am, I thank God, at present in a good measure delivered, & hope in a short time, shall be able to creepe abroad againe. There is little newes in Towne. I presume you may sometime since have heard of y<sup>e</sup> death of y<sup>e</sup> Duke of Albermarle ; but possibly, not how his honours & offices have been divided. His place in y<sup>e</sup> Bed-Chamber, Lieutenancy of Devonshire, and Blew Garter are conferred upon his Sonne. The Stewardship of y<sup>e</sup> Honour of Hampton Court & Ranger of all y<sup>e</sup> Parks there, upon y<sup>e</sup> Lady Casthmaine, the keeping of St. James's Park, upon y<sup>e</sup> Earle of Bathe. The Cock-pitt to y<sup>e</sup> Duke of Buckingham. The Generalship dyes with him. There are greate preparations for his funerall, Hy<sup>e</sup> Majestie resolving to shew his kindness towards him, to y<sup>e</sup> last. The Duchess is saide to have fourscore thousand Ginnys left her, besides a very greate joynture w<sup>th</sup> made many wish her theirs & some designe y<sup>e</sup> getting of her, when & how truly I know not, but it is very confidently reported a former husband supposed dead is come to life againe, & hath forbid those Banes. This weeke Deval y<sup>e</sup> Captaine of y<sup>e</sup> Highway men w<sup>th</sup> some of his companions, have had their judgment. He had y<sup>e</sup> honour of many Lords & Ladyes at his Tryall, where his Beauty more made compassion than his meritt, for he had 9 Inditements against him of w<sup>th</sup> he confessed one ; five were proved & y<sup>e</sup> Court would not trouble themselves w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> rest : They saye he is a lovely young fellow not above five or six & twenty yeares of age ; there has been too greate sollicitations on his behalf considering he hath been

twice proscrib'd by Proclamation, & now convict of soe many offences w<sup>th</sup> to pardon would be of ill report : your neighbour of Warwick Castle interceeded much for him. The ladys, Sunday last, were for importunate w<sup>th</sup> ye King, in his behalfe, His majestie could not be rid of them, till He told them, He was now satisfied y<sup>e</sup> report of y<sup>e</sup> Towne was true, that they were all in love w<sup>th</sup> him : There are some of his companions condemned w<sup>th</sup> him, & amongst them one Mackée, heretofore a Page to my Ld Midleton ; as this Deval was to ye Duke of Richmond : there is anothur of y<sup>e</sup> Company, who was likewise Page to y<sup>e</sup> Duke of R : who for his youthsake [*illegible*] confession, & wittneseing against his fellowes, was not himselfe tried ; to-morrow if nothing intervene is y<sup>e</sup> day of their execution. The Ld Roberts hath besought His Majestie to ease him of his Government in Ireland, & His Majestie hath taken him at his word, So that he is returning, & y<sup>e</sup> Lord John Berkely going in his place. There is a greate feude between y<sup>e</sup> Docters & Apothecaries ; the former desigening to laye aside y<sup>e</sup> latur & prepare their owne medicines. My Lord Ffaulconbrige is this weeke gone Embassadour for Venice. My Ld of Essex is going in y<sup>e</sup> same capacity for Denmarke. The Vicar hath lately sold y<sup>e</sup> Duke of Yorke a nagg for six-score Ginneys. My humble service, I beseech you, to my Cousin your Lady, and Cousin Dorothy, w<sup>th</sup> Mrs. Littleton if w<sup>th</sup> you, & soe for y<sup>e</sup> present I remaine S<sup>r</sup>,

'You most affectionate Cousin & humble Servant,  
THO: OVERBURY.'

'LONDON, Jan: y<sup>e</sup> 20<sup>th</sup>, 1669.

Here the hand of Time goes farther back still, stretching even through Mr. Somerville's grandmother to the days of King Charles the First, and in these few lines a solemn despair seems to ring at the unhappy monarch's incapacity to shake off his delusion.

'EDSTON, Mar. 22nd, 1736/7.

'MY DEAR LORD,—I am infinitely obliged to you for the news & Pamphlets, the only comfort a Rural Squire has when he is too old for Field Sports is to know what passes in the Busy World. It was a very Bold Stroke to attempt the Tragedy of Charles y<sup>e</sup> 1st. He ought to be a steady Pilot who sails on that Dangerous Coast, but I think our Friend Horace

has a much better metaphor & his Fire vastly exceeds any Writer—

‘Incedit per Jgnes  
Suppositos Areen doloso.’

‘The author was in the Right to make Fairfax his Heroe; he was an Honest Brave Man, I have seen formerly in the Custody of my Grandmother, who was his near Relation; memoirs written by the old man himself, giving an Account of all the Actions in which he was engaged, with great Simplicity and no less Modesty. I remember particularly when He was one Day telling the King that he would use his utmost Endeavour to bring the Army to serve him. The unhappy Monarch’s Answer was “Poh! my Lord, I have more Pow’r in the Army than you.” So fatally was he deluded by Cromwell, who led him with Fair Promises to the Block, & it’s supposed cut off his Head with his own Hands. But Pax on these Real Tragedies—a Feigned Story do’s as well, teaching us a Moral with equal Strength, & giving us less Pain. Neither Round-head nor Cavalier can be angry with Alzira; if ever Indignation be rais’d it must be against the Spaniard, & surely at this juncture we have some reason to be angry. Amid all the news you do me the honour to tell me, I want to know when we shall see you in Warwickshire, this will give a very sensible Pleasure to the most obedient of your servants.

‘W. SOMERVILE.

‘I beg my Compliments to Lady Somerville & your Brother.’

But ‘the ever-rolling stream’ is rushing on, and we have not time to pick out any more of these old letters, but this next one reveals a little of the habits of that day; and one can imagine the great Poet riding fast and late along the avenue-like roads from Edstone to Warwick, and then, as in the fashion of those days, arriving there more than half drunk.

‘EDSTON, Oct. 24th, 1739.

‘MY DEAR LORD,—I am extremely concern’d to hear that your L<sup>d</sup> lay upon the Road, especially so near my house as Warwick; you & yours, sick or well, I shall never think the least Incumbrances. I hope this will find you safely returned to Somerville House, which I beg to hear, & at which I shall rejoice.

‘As to the particular affair you are pleased to mention; I

shall only Say, That the unexpected Death of my poor Lady Somerville, and the long life (even to a Miracle) of my poor Mother have wrought me in great Distress. Your L<sup>d</sup>ship may some time in your life have felt some inconveniency of this kind, and therefore will more readily pittty your Friends. I make no complaints; on the contrary I humbly thank your L<sup>d</sup>ship for in minding me of the ill state of my affairs; be assured I will live upon Bread and Water before one man shall lose sixpence by me. But, my Lord, the manner in which you did this, and the Time—I had never rode so fast nor hurried on so hastily upon the road for many years, & you were pleased to open this disagreeable Affair to me at Midnight, and when I was more than half drunk and were pleas'd to make use of some harsh Expressions which I know your cooler Thoughts will not approve. But I think no more of it with any Sort of Resentment, tho' it makes a lasting Impression in my heart, I will edify by it, & be a better Manager for the future. I am now letting the land in my hands more, & I believe to a very substantial Tenant. I shall keep but two Men and two Maids. I will not spend one penny I can save; I shall never efface the Estate, but do for you and yours as I would for my own. If I outlive my Mother I shall soon pay the Bond Debts & Arrear of Interest, till then I must live upon the Rack & will bear it as patiently as Jean. From this Time (my Dear Lord) I beg I may hear no more of this Matter, but that we may correspond as we used to do. Upon my Soul I love you with the sincerest Affection, you have indeed done all I could ask, neither shall I ever decline Obedience to your commands. All will be Right, the only contingency is my Life, & indeed I have been very ill since I had the shivering & convulsion at the Parish Meeting. Dr. Hadow has now reduced it to a Quartern Ague—But I have often experienc'd the infinite Goodness of God. I shall not now die but live to overcome all these difficulties, tho' I am now almost Distracted—At least of this (my Dear Lord) be assured that to my latest Breath I shall be with the greatest Respect,

‘Your most obliged &

‘most affectionate humble servant,

‘W. SOMERVILE.

‘I beg my best Compliments to my Lady Somerville & my God Daughter. The Dear little Boy is well at Worcester.’

But a brighter refrain follows, and the 'finest women in Brittain' assemble and drink Lord Somervile's health.

'MY DEAR LORD,—As your L'ship was pleased to offer me a fresh Cod, I beg you will be so good as to send it by Newcomb, the Stratford Carrier, whose Inn is the Ram, in Smithfield. It might be at the Inn on Wednesday night next and will be with me on Saturday night. My Grand Entertainment is on Monday, when the finest Women in Brittain will drink your L'ships Health & wish you of the Party; there must be great care in Packing of the Fish. I beg my most humble service to my Lady Somervile, and with all the compliments of the Season from

'My dear Lord,

'Most affectionately yours,

'W. SOMERVILE.'

And we, too, with over a century of time between us, rise up with a grateful memory and pay our homage to the Warwickshire poet.

H. I. ARDEN.

*UPROOTED.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SOME WESTERN FOLK," ETC., ETC.

THROUGH the length and breadth of the village street absolute quiet and stillness reigned, a hush almost as of a Sunday hung over the place. At one end of the street two women stood at their doors. They glanced once in a while at the school-house opposite, then up and down the street again, as though the interest of the scene might have quickened during their glance aside, and they were fearful of losing one spark. The afternoon sun shone warmly, but with slanting, mellow rays. It made the ugly, straggling village street look quite pretty and lovable, as it shone on Mrs. Parkinson's windows until they glittered, and into the little cottage room—bedroom and sitting-room in one—where sat Mrs. Parkinson's lodger.

Miss Emmeline Forester loved the afternoon sun and the way in which it shone into her room. 'There was no vulgarity of extreme in it,' she thought. She did not reflect that if there had been a little more vulgarity of extreme she would have shivered less in winter.

The clock in the church tower struck four. As if by magic the whole scene changed. The women retreated within doors to see to fires and kettles. With one shout of triumph the street was filled with racing, yelling children, more or less slipping out of or into coats and scarves; the elder ones, who happened to be untrammelled by cares of family, rushed on ahead, quickly followed by the more trammelled ones dragging their trammels after them at a smart trot, to the infinite danger of their noses, knees, and other scratchable parts. Last of all came 'the infants' in little groups or straggling lines—Five-years-old leading Four-years-old, and Four leading Three, wide-eyed, open-mouthed, uncertain of tread, grave and speculative of countenance, as though appalled by the dreary vistas of learning opened before their eyes by turning that key to knowledge, the alphabet, opening as it had on vast, dreary tracts—

before which their unwilling feet hesitated—of pot-hooks, strokes, and hangers, leading to the dreary desert of 'copper-plate' and 'small hand,' and the rough, stony ground of ever-increasing syllables, which lead in turn to the fair-seeming, heart-breaking land, with its innumerable pitfalls and inaccessible peaks, where lessons are 'learnt by heart.'

Miss Emmeline Forester sat at tea in her little room. She did not, as was her custom, get up and stand in her window to see the children go by. She was entertaining a guest. Despair sat opposite her at her little tea-table, and stared so persistently at her that she could not enjoy her meal at all. She took a sip of tea occasionally, but it was too weak to exhilarate her; she ate nothing, for the simple reason that there was nothing there to eat.

Her little room presented a curious medley of the ancient and modern, good and bad, in furniture. Two Chippendale chairs of her own rubbed shoulders with a varnished chair of Mrs. Parkinson's. Amongst the large prints of 'The Faithful Friend' and a 'Bird's-Eye View of the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir' hung lovely little miniature portraits of Miss Emmeline's father and mother, and a large painting in oils of her grandfather. The common little iron bed was covered by day with a coverlet of silk, a delicate dove-coloured silk, with forget-me-nots, embroidered by Miss Emmeline's mother's own hand, trailing all over it; which was the wonder and envy of all visitors to her little apartment.

Perhaps it was a kindness on the part of Fate which had let Miss Emmeline down by degrees to her present position. She certainly felt it less when she had to live in one room, and one only, than when she had had first to give up the independence and comfort of her old home and move into a cottage, or, again, when she had to give up her cottage and live in two rooms. For one thing, she had met with so much kindness that she had become reconciled to lodgings—at one time her dread and abomination—and for another, her few pieces of furniture made a much more handsome show when massed together than when scattered through two rooms.

At the time she had taken the room in Mrs. Parkinson's cottage her income had amounted to ten shillings a week, derived from a little bit of land left her by her father. On ten shillings she had managed to exist with a certain amount of comfort, but with no margin for emergencies. The question



she had to face this afternoon was how she was to manage for the future on half a crown a week less, and the question was one she could not answer.

The prospect dismayed and confused her. When her brother's letter had arrived saying that the value of the property had deteriorated, and would only bring in a bare twenty pounds a year, she had felt too stunned to take it in. As the day wore on she recovered by degrees, and began to realise her position ; by the time she sat down to tea she had realised it only too well.

She did not resent never having been consulted on her business matters, or the loss she had sustained. John knew best. John was a good business man, and he would get all that was possible for the land. Miss Emmeline believed implicitly in her brother's business capacities, and the excellence of his head she threw against the lack of it in his heart. It never occurred to her that her brother, a prosperous lawyer in Manchester, might, without injury to himself, have continued her pittance, and the idea of asking him to was one which would never enter her head.

He was a cold, hard man, thinking of little beyond his business, with a colder, harder wife and two daughters in whom the refrigerated temperaments of their parents had only become exaggerated by reproduction. As Miss Emmeline's fortunes declined they would have been pleased had she and her poverty gone down altogether below the horizon of the village 'where grandpapa was so much thought of.' They thought she might have had consideration enough to go and bury herself where she and they were not known, instead of disgracing them all by living in a hovel.

Miss Emmeline never had considered she could lose in social position, even though she should come to living in a hovel. In the place where she was born, and her family had always been of 'the gentry,' she could never become a 'nobody,' and Wendron was to her the one spot to live in, it was *home* in the fullest sense of the word ; she loved every tree, and house, and stick, and stone in the village ; she knew every man, woman, and child, and basked in the esteem they held her in, for she was very lonely and very sensitive. It was the greatest comfort of her life, the knowledge that she was loved—and she was loved by young and old, and the children worshipped her. She was their patroness and comforter, their sympathiser in all their joys and woes. It was a daily delight to her to see them

go and come from school ; she never failed to take her stand in her little window to see them pass by, and they all looked in and curtsied to her and smiled, and she nodded and smiled back, and most kindly to those she cared for least, for, try as she would, she could not help loving best the prettiest and cleanest, but the bearers of tear-stained countenances received her fullest and sincerest sympathy. Her own school life had been chequered, and she had not forgotten it.

But to-day as the children ran by they looked in in vain, and smiled at space, and the tear-stained face of Mercy Hockaday, who lived opposite, was raised for sympathy to an unsympathetically blank window. Old Miss Forester had a difficult sum to work out, and until her task was done Despair meant to keep her in.

It was through the children that relief at last came.

'Polly wants to know what's become of Miss Em'leen.' Mrs. Parkinson knocked at the door with one hand and opened it with the other, talking all the time, as her custom was. 'They was fretted 'cause they did'en see you at the window.'

Miss Emmeline looked up with an attempt at her ready smile, but so poor an attempt that it made Mrs. Parkinson's eyes feel weak to see it. She had thought all day that something was wrong with her lodger. But her lodger had kept her trouble, if she had one, to herself, and Mrs. Parkinson was 'not one to pry into other people's affairs.' Her glance rested for an instant on the table and the grate, but so lightly that even sensitive Miss Emmeline did not notice it.

'The dear children,' she said, 'how quick they are to observe! No, I did not go to the window when I heard their little feet running. I—I was——'. She hesitated, to try to speak calmly, then quite suddenly she broke down and the tears came.

Mrs. Parkinson was at her side in a moment, her arm around the thin, quivering shoulders. 'You'm in trouble,' she said kindly ; 'I knowed there was something wrong. My dear, I've seemed to have knowed it all day, but of course I couldn't say nothing till you did. Hush, my dear, don't 'ee take on so. Can't 'ee tell *me* what 'tis, I might be able to help 'ee, and you knows 'twon't go no further ?'

And then Miss Emmeline's tongue was loosened. She sought comfort and found it, and the mere telling of her trouble relieved her. Mrs. Parkinson took her out to the big

armchair by the fire in her own kitchen, and then she quietly bustled round and made some tea, strong and good, then she sat down opposite Miss Emmeline and pondered.

The very sight of her thus taking her affairs in hand comforted Miss Emmeline. The sight of her broad face and generous turned-up nose always cheered her, it was so full of good temper and calm common sense, now, kindness, strength, comfort positively radiated from it. For some seconds there was silence; Mrs. Parkinson was thinking; Miss Emmeline was all in a flutter of nervous excitement.

'I must work,' she said wistfully, 'that is certain; but where can I get work to do?'

She waited anxiously for Mrs. Parkinson to speak. That good soul took several sips of tea before she answered.

'There's one comfort with you, miss, if you'll excuse my saying it—there's one comfort with you, you haven't no false pride. You'm a lady, and everybody knows it, and they that didn't know it would see it for theirselves.'

Miss Emmeline bridled a little with pleasure.

'Whatever you does, nobody here won't think no worse of you, and you bain't one of them that thinks they bemeans theirselves by working. That's where the difference is between real ladies and mannyfactured ones.'

Miss Emmeline nodded vigorously. 'I would gladly do anything I could to add a little to my income. I don't mind what I do as long,' she added as an afterthought, 'as it is honest and respectable.' She looked a little shocked at the bare mention of the possibility of anything else.

'We will find some way, miss, you may be sure,' said Mrs. Parkinson emphatically, though she had not a single idea wherewith to back up her assurance; but Miss Emmeline was comforted, and with a mind almost at rest went to bed and slept soundly.

A week later the infants of the village assembled in Miss Emmeline's little room for the purpose of being helped by her over the stony ways of the alphabet and rudimentary English, while five still younger children played about the room or slept on the bed. The silk coverlet was carefully folded away, and a homely patchwork one of Mrs. Parkinson's substituted, the Chippendale chairs were draped in holland coverings.

The infants had shown Miss Emmeline the way out of her

difficulty ; she had instituted with their aid a school and crèche. The brilliant idea was Mrs. Parkinson's.

The next six months were the happiest Miss Emmeline had known for many years, she simply revelled in the babies. All the love which had been dammed up in her so many, many years burst forth and poured in a torrent over them. They filled her very life. Her face, at all times cheerful, now beamed smiles, love and sympathy shone in her soft, liquid-brown eyes, the pathos that had hitherto lain in them was driven away by the happiness that positively radiated from them. She won all the mothers' hearts, and their children from them, and her school grew and multiplied, until her little room would scarcely hold her pupils.

Then out of pure kindness of heart Miss Emmeline dealt the death-blow at her own happiness. She thought her brother John must be worried and anxious about her, and that it would be a great relief to his mind to know that she was not suffering either want or sorrow. So she wrote a long letter to him, telling him of her new source of income, and of her exceeding happiness, begging him not to grieve or worry about her, and expressing her regret that she had not started her little school before.

'I think your sister tries to what depths she can drag us,' said Mrs. Forester incisively ; 'I really must insist that she is not allowed to lower her family as she pleases, and *Miss Forester, a sister of yours*, keeping a village school and crèche ! Probably taking the horrid things out in their perambulators, for there is nothing at which she, with her low tastes, would stop. It must be put an end to, John ; for the girls' sake it must be stopped at once. If she will not go elsewhere to live we must have her here. I would give her her food and a room willingly, that I might have the satisfaction of knowing that she was not further disgracing us all ; she could dress herself on her twenty pounds a year, or whatever it is. She is presentable, that is one consolation, and she could keep pretty much to her own room.'

John Forester disliked changes in his household, and the thought of a permanent resident, especially one whom he foresaw would be a never-ending cause of squabbles and unpleasantness, was hateful to him.

'If you had only let me pay her the few pounds a year she lost all this would never have happened.'

'I wish I had done so,' said his wife, which was a great admission on her part, and showed how terribly the humiliation had affected her. 'I will go myself and bring her here,' she added.

Consequently, a day or two later Mrs. John Forester descended on her sister-in-law—descended as a thick cloud, shutting out all light and happiness from Miss Emmeline.

At first the poor little lady refused to agree to the plan laid before her. She put it aside as impossible, out of the question. She had never been out of the village for more than a week at a time in all her life before, and her home-sickness during that time was still vividly impressed on her mind. Then she pleaded to be left alone, and at last implored, with tears in her eyes, that she might not be taken away. But Mrs. Forester was accustomed to ruling, and she was not going to be balked when such really important issues were at stake. She laid before Miss Emmeline in emphatic terms her duty to her brother and his family, their harrowed feelings, and the great humiliation she had put upon them; she reminded her of her duty to the memories of her father and mother. Miss Emmeline was laid at last, a writhing, agonised victim, on the altar of duty, and consent to share her brother's home was wrung from her.

The first real humiliation of her lifetime began then. She who had never before been dependent on any one for a farthing would have to have even her railway fare paid for her. Every mouthful she ate would be the food of charity. She consented to go, but not at once, not with her sister-in-law. She stipulated for one clear week in which to disband her school and settle her affairs.

'Give away those old odds and ends,' said Mrs. Forester, waving her hand loftily round at her few precious possessions. 'The room you will have is nicely furnished.'

Miss Emmeline said nothing. A project was growing in her mind. Out of her little income she would pay the rent of that room, and keep her things there, keep it always as it was. It comforted her to know that these things at least would not change. She felt, too, she would have some place to fly to, in case—in case 'Duty' no longer made such demands upon her. It took her the whole week to dismiss her school and say her goodbyes, and those last days were full of acute pain to the poor old affectionate heart. She had taken deep root in the place, and her roots spread in all directions; now she was

being torn up, and the snapping of every tendril, even the tiniest, caused her agony. She was as full of sentiment as she could be. She loved every tree and house and walk in the place ; she loved them so much that when it came to the point she could not bring herself to go and say goodbye to them, to turn her back on them for the last time, to look at a dying tree or a tumbledown gate, and think, 'I shall never see you again—never, never. If ever I do come back you will be gone.' Her eyes brimmed over with tears at the mere thought. She was obliged to go and have a farewell chat with almost every soul in the village, she could not neglect them to spare herself.

There were generally tears in her eyes in those days, and they brimmed over and wore furrows in her cheeks, which were never smoothed out again. By time the last day came she was completely worn out.

'Let me have my tea with you, Mrs. Parkinson, please,' she pleaded. 'I shall be spared the feeling that it is the last I shall have in my own little room. If—if the sun were to shine in there as it usually does, and the children were to come running by and look in—I—I could not bear it. I feel I can't bear any more, I wish it was all over now—and I—was gone. These last hours are very trying.' The tears ran swiftly down her cheeks.

Again Mrs. Parkinson put her arms round the little old, frail body, and pressed the poor aching head against her ample bosom, just as she would have done to a child. 'Don't 'ee take on so, my dear,' she said, trying to speak cheerfully, though her eyes too were full, 'you'll make yourself ill. I can't believe but what you'll be back again—some day. Something tells me you'll be back before long.'

Even the vaguest prospect of such an event comforted Miss Emmeline. 'I think I should die of joy if I knew I need not go,' she said.

The next day Thomas Parkinson drove her and her boxes to the station, and Mrs. Parkinson walked the whole four miles there—there not being room for her in the conveyance—rather than Miss Emmeline should start alone ; and she wept all the four miles there, and sobbed aloud all the four miles home, until poor Thomas was obliged to weep a little too, and his wife comforted herself by chiding him for his foolishness.

Miss Emmeline was too stricken to weep at all, and as the days went by, and she sat forlorn in her brother's house, quiet and still, never weeping, never complaining, John thought she was happy, and had not, after all, really felt leaving her old home, and everything. The others never thought about it.

Mrs. Forester had thought it best not to tell her husband of the piteous scene she had gone through in Miss Emmeline's little room.

It was the first and last scene Miss Emmeline made. The poor, lonely little woman was strangely idle in those days. She did nothing, absolutely nothing, save send off, once a week, the money for the rent of her room to Mrs. Parkinson, and a few lines to hope they were all well. She never said a word of herself. For such an industrious, busy little woman such a change, in itself, looked bad; but no one knew her tastes, or had time to inquire into them.

She could not read much, for her eyesight was not good. She had no needlework to do. Everything about the house was so fashionable and new, that Miss Emmeline dared not produce her old-fashioned work. So she sat, hour after hour, staring before her; she was not allowed to look out of window, because it was never done in good society she was told. She had tried, timidly, to take an interest in her nieces' employments and amusements, but their haughty frigidity repelled her. So she sat, holding a book for the sake of appearances, but all she saw on its pages were pictures of what was being done in Wendron at each hour and minute of the day; and her soft eyes grew more and more weary and pathetic, and the longing in her face spoke as plainly as words, only no one noticed it to read it.

All through the summer she languished in the great, cheerless house, and pictured to herself the hay-waggon rumbling down Wendron Street, and the women tramping home, tired and heavy-footed, with their gleanings on their heads; the quiet calm of the long, light evenings, when all the village folk stood at their doors and gossipped. And when she sat down to the formal, unsociable dinner, which she abhorred, she longed, with a painful longing, for the simple little homely supper in her own room. Then came the dreary, foggy winter, and she pictured, with aching heart, her bright little fireside, the flickering of the flames reflected on the walls;

she longed to hear again the busy puff of the bellows as she quickened a log into a blaze, to give her light enough to have her tea by, and that the children might see her window shining cheerfully as they ran by. The gas-stoves in her brother's house sickened her. They were so—so unsympathetic, so typical of the place.

With spring came the spring-cleaning when the house was to be given over to the painters and cleaners, and the whole family were to depart to be out of the discomfort. Then came the question of what to do with Miss Emmeline. They could not take her with them, they declared, for they were going on a round of visits. John, looking at his sister musingly, noticed for the first time that she was not looking well ; she seemed to have faded like a flower kept in a close, hot room.

'Would you—would you like to go to——?' he said in his heavy, slow way, and paused.

Miss Emmeline looked up quickly, her heart beat so fast that she thought she would suffocate.

Her sister-in-law noticed the look. 'To the sea—to Yarmouth—or—or any place of that sort, for a change?' she asked in her cold, unsympathetic voice. 'You could have—one of the maids—for company.'

Miss Emmeline drooped again. 'No, thank you,' she said in a quiet, lifeless voice ; 'if I may stay here in my own room—I—I would rather. I will not give much trouble.'

So it was settled. She did not have to use much persuasion. A day or two later the family departed, and Miss Emmeline was left in the great, empty house, which seemed emptier and colder and more unhome-like than ever when the carpets were up and all curtains and rugs gone, and through the rooms and passages echoed the voices of the deliberate painters and the flirting maids. Miss Emmeline was so little trouble to them that they forgot her altogether sometimes ; but it appeared to matter little to her whether she had her meals or not. She never went out ; she had scarcely been outside the house since she entered it. The wide, busy streets frightened her, she felt so lonely, and was so afraid of losing her way. So she sat in her own room and thought of the wallflowers and pansies and forget-me-nots blooming now in the cottage gardens, and the more modest spring-cleaning there, where the women did their own white-washing and papering, and put up freshly starched white



curtains in their windows, and then went outside and frankly admired them.

She had thought she would feel no more lonely when she was left quite alone than she had before, but the emptiness of the house and her aloofness oppressed her cruelly. She knew, too, that the servants would rather she were not there and the knowledge, so new to her, fretted her terribly.

And then one day a parcel came for her by post; she recognised Mrs. Parkinson's handwriting, and, with a little thrill of pleasure, undid the string with trembling fingers. They trembled so it took her a long time to untie the knots; but she would not, for anything, have cut one. She enjoyed lingering over this parcel from home and speculating as to its contents. She smiled for almost the first time since her arrival as she took off the brown paper wrapping, and the cover of the box within. Then she leaned her face in her hands and burst out sobbing. It was a strange weakness which suddenly overtook her. She did not cry out nor shed a tear or utter a word. A sudden passion of dry, low sobs overwhelmed her, and shook her and beat her down; she sobbed as one too spent for passion, too weary to battle any longer.

The sight of the wallflowers in the box and the scent of them had touched the poor, lonely, aching heart past all endurance. She herself could not understand why she sobbed and trembled so and could not control herself. Vaguely she was frightened at herself.

When the maid came with her dinner she found her lying, white and faint, upon the couch. 'I think I am ill,' she said when they had brought her back to consciousness. They discussed the advisability of sending for their mistress; but Miss Emmeline would not hear of it, the mere thought of it worked her up into a state of nervous excitability which frightened them. As soon as she could sit up she wrote a few shaky lines, and asked one of the maids to direct it for her to 'Mrs. Parkinson, May Cottage, Wendron,' and to post it. Then she lay down and waited. She was so excited and pleased and frightened at what she had done that she scarcely closed her eyes or rested for the next two days.

By the evening of the second she was too weak and worn out to think even, and lay in a sort of doze. Late in the evening a cab drew up before the house, and a minute later

a heavy footstep clattered up the carpetless stair. Miss Emmeline raised herself in bed.

'Pay him what he asks; if he's robbing me, he's robbing me,' said a voice, the sound of which made Miss Emmeline's eyes brighten, 'and I can't help it. I haven't no time for iteming now.'

Then the door was opened wide and a massive form rushed in. 'Oh, my dear, my dear! to think what they've brought 'ee to, and me not knowing,' and the great, strong arms were round the little fragile body, and the weary old head rested on the ample bosom. That night Miss Emmeline slept long and heavily, and woke refreshed.

'Be 'ee well enough to take a journey?'

Miss Emmeline looked up into Mrs. Parkinson's face with wide, longing, terrified eyes. 'A—a journey?' she asked questioningly.

'Yes. I'm going to take 'ee 'ome the minute you can stand it.'

'Oh, I must not! I dare not.'

'But, my dear, you must, and you'm going to. I reckons that I'm saving them that's been keeping you, from the guilt of murder, and unless your brother comes hisself and fetches you, and you *chooses* to go, there you bides—and I don't calc'late he will come. I've wrote him more than he knowed before. My dear, don't 'ee be feared; you wanted somebody to stand up for 'ee, you trust yourself to me. I'll say this much for your brother, if he'd a-knowed before what my letter have a-told him he wouldn't never have made 'ee come to live here. I'll give my word for one thing, Mrs. Forester don't set foot over my doorstep again; my house is my own, and I can keep out who I thinks fit.'

Miss Emmeline was too weak to do battle, too full of longing to resist, too weary to fear any one. Mrs. Parkinson saw her advantage. 'And oh, my dear Miss Emmeline, we have missed 'ee so; the babies is all running wild for want of 'ee, neither one of the mothers can go out to work, 'cause they can't leave 'em; there's nobody as can take your place. Do 'ee come back, my dear. Everybody's longing to see 'ee, and I aired your bed and laid in your fire already, so's Tom's only got to put a match to it, when he knows what time we'm coming, and I reckon he'll have it all looking so comfortable as I could myself. You must come home, you ain't wanted

here, and you'm being killed, and Wendron ain't Wendron without Miss Forester.'

'I will—I will come. I'll go home with you. I must—I must,' she cried, suddenly giving way, and her eyes shone with excitement and joy and defiance. 'There's no place for me here. I am one of the unwanted; but you think I am needed at home—they really want me, Mrs. Parkinson?' She looked up eagerly at her. The words had been a tonic to her, and she longed to hear them again.

'Needed, Miss Emleen! that ain't no word for it. We'm all longing to see 'ee about the place again; it's been so wisht as you never, without 'ee, my dear, and I've fretted so. Tom nearly took to going to "public"; he said the place was so wisht. I cries every time I goes into your room to air it, to see it empty. I did even so late as yesterday.'

Miss Emmeline's return was a triumph, and Tom's preparations were a triumph. He had a little fire burning to look 'homely-like,' he said, and the tea-things spread on the table, in Miss Forester's own room, where the window stood wide open, and the sun poured in and a little breeze to temper it; and on every available ledge and corner he had placed bunches of sweet peas and mignonette and clove pinks, in tumblers and jugs, being afraid to touch Miss Emmeline's own precious china; and the kettle was timed to a nicety to sing on their arrival, the teapot was warming on the stove, and Tom had at his own expense provided a pennyworth of cream for Miss Emmeline's tea.

And when she saw it all the poor tired little invalid smiled and clapped her hands with joy, and wrung Tom's hand with all her might, which did not amount to much, and kissed the children a dozen times, and ended by walking quite briskly from spot to spot, and at last, with a sigh of infinite content, sank into her chair too happy to know what to say or do next.

Mrs. Parkinson radiated joy and victory, and for the whole of the first week Miss Emmeline did little but rest and receive, one by one, her neighbours, her old pupils, and the babies old and new, and basked in and rejoiced in the welcome they gave her. And Mrs. Parkinson, beaming with triumph and the joy of possession, nursed her and fed her and gloried in her rapid recovery. For to lie there in her own little room, with all the things she loved about her, to see the afternoon

sun shining in in the same old way, to hear the feet of the children and their voices, as they hurried home from school, was life, and all that was good in life, to Miss Emmeline, and she would creep to the window to watch them, and though the Five who led Four, and the Four who led Three, were not the old Five, Four, and Three, but were new, or advanced; they all looked in and smiled at her, and waved their hands as though they really loved her. And she loved them all.

MABEL QUILLER COUCH.

*TWO GREAT ALLEGORIES:**'THE FAËRIE QUEENE' AND THE 'PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.'*


---

EVERY one who has to do with the training of the young mind knows how dearly all children love stories. And it is not children only who like to be transported out of the common surroundings of everyday life into some fairy world of romance. Therefore, when an earnest teacher is desirous of imparting some important truth, it has been found in all ages that the most attractive form in which he can present his lesson is the allegorical. It is in that form that ethical teaching first presents itself to the mind of the child. A moral tacked on to a story is resented, and omitted, but the moral presented by analogy is not only apprehended at once, but received and appropriated—whether it come in the form of the fable, attributing human passions and speech to the animals, or in that of the fairy tale representing evil dispositions as giants and dragons, and unseen spiritual help as some magical power, irresistible against all the opposing influences which endeavour to check its beneficent working.

So is it also with the savage. His very religion takes an allegorical form. The foundation of all mythology is the personification of natural forces—like the sun and the sea—and of moral characteristics, like wisdom and power. Going next, from the dawning of intelligence either in the individual or the race, to its perfection in the deepest thought of the philosopher, and the most refined results of civilisation, the same love of analogy is noticed; in fact a desire is often shown to discover some hidden allegorical meaning where perhaps the author had never intended it. We read in Tennyson's *Life* how he was asked what was the hidden meaning of his '*Idylls of the King*.' His deeper and more scholarly readers were not content with the simple interpretation which would make it a record of the noble deeds of an 'ideal knight'—they endeavoured to see in it a representation of inward struggles and

conflicts. From the earliest ages, therefore, to the most cultured times allegory has suited all classes of mind, and are we not told of the greatest Teacher of all—He who ‘knew what was in man—that ‘without a parable spake He not unto them’?

The allegory has been used for many purposes. There is its *political* form—such as that of the old fables of the Belly and its Members, to show the unity of the State; this may be traced back to the days of the Judges, when Jotham, by his parable of the trees choosing a king, illustrated the usurpation of Abimelech, and it goes on to the times of Swift satirising the different parties of his day in ‘Gulliver’s Travels.’ Then there is the *moral* form which is found in Æsop’s Fables, and in many an Eastern apologue. But its more frequent form is the religious. It is the highest and most important truths of all which are oftenest presented in such pictorial shape—perhaps on account of their very spirituality they have seemed to need some tangible shape and visible dress to make them clear to the eye.

Anyhow the two greatest allegories in our literature have a distinctly religious meaning, and there is a curious resemblance between them in spite of the difference between their authors and their aims. The ‘Faërie Queene’ is the work of a Court poet, favoured by the great ones of his day, and designed to honour them and celebrate their deeds, as well as to portray an ideal Christian hero. The ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’ is written by an uneducated tinker—despised by the cultured, disapproved of by the orthodox. It paints no bright ideal of successful heroes; it is written to show the struggles, and often the failures, of a sinful soul.

As a natural consequence, therefore, the effect of the two works was different. Spenser, the laureate of his own day, was the founder of a school of poets, and provided the model upon which greater writers framed their work. Bunyan, the despised and persecuted sectary, was probably little read in his own generation, or beyond the circle of his co-religionists. Even as late as the end of the eighteenth century those who, like Cowper, recognised his power, speak of him half apologetically—

‘I name thee not, lest so despised a name,  
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame.’

But, as Southey notes, the work of the great dreamer made its way by its own fascination among the people: they ‘knew

what they admired,' and as time went on 'the opinion of the multitude had been ratified by the judicious,' until a writer like Macaulay could say of its author that only one other mind of his century possessed the imaginative faculty as he did—the mind that produced 'Paradise Lost.'

It is not derogatory, therefore, to the 'poet of poets,' as Spenser has been called, to compare his work with Bunyan's. For one who has read the 'Faërie Queene' thousands have delighted in the dear old Pilgrim. And to many who know the latter allegory by heart, it may come almost as a surprise to discover that nearly a hundred years before<sup>1</sup> a very like tale had been the favourite study of the learned. For in spite of the differences which attended the production of the two works, in spite of the wide gulf both in social position and mental culture between the authors, there is a curious resemblance between the books. Though the leading image is different, the one work comparing life to a fight, and the other to a journey, yet since the warrior has to travel far before he begins to struggle, and the traveller to meet with many enemies on his journey, it is not surprising that like adventures befall both heroes.

This is easily seen by a short comparison of the two stories. Fortunately, as Mr. Craik says, Spenser's work admits of being studied in parts, each book of the six containing the adventures of a separate knight, representing some special virtue. Otherwise the readers of Spenser would get confused with the various interpretations, and anyhow it is very difficult to consider the work as a whole, though Spenser himself tells us that his aim was to give the picture of an ideal man—'to fashion' as he says, 'a gentleman or noble person in virtuous or gentle discipline.' Prince Arthur, the embodiment of all the virtues, never fails; the other knights, types of some special Christian grace, are sometimes misled and overcome. But in comparing Spenser's allegory with Bunyan's we are concerned only with the first book of the 'Faërie Queene,' and partly with its complements the second and the third, and with the religious interpretation. In the fifth book, the legend of Sir Arthegal, the Knight of Justice, the allegory is rather historical and political than religious, and the fourth and sixth books,

<sup>1</sup> The 'Faërie Queene' was published in 1590, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' in 1678.

containing the adventures of the Knights of Friendship and Courtesy, are not only devoted to the praise of special moral virtues, but full of many digressions hardly connected with the main thread of the narrative. It is in the first book, which recounts the victory of the Red Cross Knight—the type of Holiness, over error and evil that the religious meaning principally appears. The story is made clear by Spenser's own explanations, otherwise it would be rather difficult to deduce it from the poem. Gloriana, Queen of Fairyland, is holding her court, and she sends out knights to help and succour the oppressed. The Red Cross Knight is sent first—at the request of a fair lady in a mourning stole, who comes to beg for a champion to deliver her father and mother from a dragon. The next day a palmer brings in an infant with bloody hands, whose parents have been slain by a wicked enchantress, and Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, is sent forth to punish her. These two books contain the religious allegory; the third, the legend of Britomart, the lady-knight, is partly supplementary to them and partly a link connecting them with the more historical part of the poem.

The adventures of St. George, the Red Cross Knight, clearly represent primarily the struggles of the Christian warrior. Guided by his lady—Una, or Truth—he passes through the wandering wood. While there he slays the monster Error in her den. He and Una then rest for the night in the hut of an old hermit, who is really a wicked magician, and who, by false dreams, makes the knight doubt the truth of his ladye-love. Disappointed, and believing himself deceived, the knight rushes out and leaves Una. Travelling on, he encounters a Saracen knight, called Sansfoy, whom he overcomes, and from whom he delivers a fair lady. This is really the false witch Duessa. She begs the knight to protect her, and while they rest together under a tree, the tree speaks and warns the knight who his companion really is. Duessa, fearing these revelations, persuades the knight to accompany her to the Palace of Pride, the Court of Queen Lucifera, where he is gorgeously entertained, until the arrival of another pagan knight, Sansjoy, who challenges the Red Cross Knight to fight. St. George is victorious, but his enemy is caught up by a cloud and saved. The good knight's dwarf, showing him the prison under the Palace of Pride, warns him to depart secretly from the treacherous shelter. But Duessa follows



him, and persuades him to rest and drink of a fountain, the effects of which so weaken him that he is easily overcome and imprisoned by his enemy, the Giant Orgoglio.

Meanwhile the devoted Una is seeking her knight. She takes refuge in the Cave of Superstition; she falls into the power of the third pagan brother, Sansloy, from whom she is delivered by some wild folk whom she endeavours to instruct. Her retreat being discovered by the old magician, she still wanders forth to seek her knight, and at last meets his dwarf, who tells her of the knight's imprisonment by the giant. She next meets Prince Arthur, who goes with her to rescue the prisoner. Always successful, this model hero destroys the giant and his monster, shows Duessa in her true character and liberates St. George, who forthwith starts off on his quest with Una. The next enemy encountered is Despair, who tries to persuade the knight to kill himself, only Una interposes, and reminds the knight that his work of slaying the dragon is not yet done. Seeing that from the effect of his imprisonment he is not yet fit to perform his labours, Una persuades her knight to rest in the House of Holiness, where dwells the Lady Celia and her three daughters, Faith, Hope, and Charity. Here they stay till the knight is fully recovered, cured by the medicines of Patience and the whip of Penance, and comforted by the View of the New Jerusalem from the Hill of Heavenly Contemplation.

At last he arrives with Una at her home, where he fights with the dragon. Often worsted, he is refreshed with the Well and Tree of Life; he returns to the attack and finally the dragon is slain, the king and queen set free, and the knight married to Una.

The second book contains the adventures of Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, in his efforts to avenge the death of the parents of the deserted babe on the wicked enchantress Acrasia. Guyon first rests at the castle of three sisters—Elissa, Medina, and Perissa—where he leaves the babe. Although the boaster Braggadoccio takes his horse and spear, Guyon still goes on delivering by the way the victims of Furor or Anger. To reach Acrasia's Bower of Bliss it is necessary to cross the Idle Lake, where other knights have been lulled to sleep. Guyon is also hindered by Mammon, who takes him to his underground kingdom, offers him all the wealth it contains, and his daughter, Ambition, to be his wife. Still Guyon resists

the temptation, and at last Mammon allows him to return to the upper world. There the knight is refreshed by the care of angels, and continues his work, rowing over the Idle Lake, past Greediness and Reproach, until he arrives at the Bower of Bliss, where he imprisons the enchantress and destroys her garden.

Not only has Guyon received angel help, but he also, when wearied, had met Prince Arthur and rested with him at the castle of the Lady Alma, who is attacked by a wicked chief called Maleger, who whenever he falls springs up again with renewed strength, and who is yet finally overcome by the ever-victorious prince.

Such are a few of the principal incidents of the first part of Spenser's allegory. Its interpretation is twofold. No doubt Spenser meant to paint a picture of the work done by the great men of his day for the England of Elizabeth, and the danger she was in from error, especially the errors of Rome. But that hardly seems the primary purpose of at least this part of the poem; it is the struggle of the Christian man against the enemies of his soul, the final victory of truth over falsehood. Very akin to this is Bunyan's tale of the travelling pilgrim to the Celestial City. It is not necessary to recapitulate that well-known story. Every one recollects how, like the Red Cross Knight, Christian is opposed by foes; how, like Guyon, he is persuaded to rest and indulge himself instead of proceeding on his way. The heroes of both allegories are enabled to overcome by supernatural help, and refreshed in houses of rest. Though Bunyan's chief object seems to be to depict struggles and Spenser's to paint victories; Bunyan's to show the inward natural inclinations to evil, and Spenser's to describe external enemies, yet since temptations come to Spenser's knights, and enemies oppose Bunyan's pilgrim, the reader cannot help remarking a great similarity between the allegories.

The special points of likeness may be described in very few words. The Evil One—the opponent of the Christian—appears as Orgoglio and the dragon in the one allegory, and as Apollyon and Giant Grim in the other. The temptations of the world are drawn by Spenser in his pictures of the luxury of the Palace of Pride and the riches of the Cave of Mammon; in Bunyan they are described under the image of Vanity Fair and the offers of Demas to Christian and of Madam Bubble to Standfast. The temptation of the flesh in its first form, as a

longing for rest and ease, appears under the figure of sleep and ease in both books ; Guyon resists this temptation at the Idle Lake ; Christian yields and loses his roll when he sleeps in the arbour, and only by a great effort passes scatheless through the Enchanted Ground. The Red Cross Knight, deceived by Duessa, drinks of the weakening fountain, and laying aside his armour is overcome by Orgoglio ; Christian and Hopeful, resting in Bypath Meadow, fall into the power of Giant Despair. So with the other fleshly temptation, the desire for pleasure ; Spenser images this by Mammon's offer of his daughter Ambition to Guyon ; and Bunyan makes 'Adam the First' propose his daughters, the 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,' as brides to Faithful. Faithful, all through, is like the Knight of Temperance ; just as Guyon will not be persuaded to stay by Excess, and refuses her goblet, so does Faithful refuse the offers of Wanton.

The devil, the world, and the flesh, the heroes in both allegories strive with these enemies of the soul, and both, when wearied with their work, nearly fall victims to Despair.

Again, in each allegory the heroes have refreshments provided for them. The House Beautiful seems almost copied from the House of Holiness—the strengthening of the soul by Christian graces and its purification by repentance appear in both—and the view of the New Jerusalem from the Hill of Heavenly Contemplation is exactly like Christian's vision of the Celestial City from the Delectable Mountains. While as to less important resting-places, with their comically named minor characters, it seems almost impossible to imagine that Bunyan had not read Spenser when we read of the names given even to the servants in the two houses of rest. Surely it seems as if the maid Humblemind were borrowed from the porter Humilità, and the cook 'Taste-that-which-is-good' from Alma's 'Concoction and Digestion.' For a description like that of Alma's dwelling, the house with its five bulwarks for the five senses, we must turn rather to Bunyan's other allegory, that of the 'Holy War,' where the City of Mansoul, with its five gates, is besieged by Diabolus ; the difference being that Spenser's soul, though attacked from without by Maleger—the fleshly nature—has not the traitor *within* that Bunyan's has, for the preacher always emphasised man's natural leaning to evil—the heart itself deceitful, as well as deceived, and 'desperately wicked.'

Again, the less-important characters in the two allegories have an extraordinary resemblance. Archimago, the seeming hermit who induces the Knight of Holiness to rest, foreshadows Worldly Wiseman and the Flatterer, who try to persuade the pilgrim to choose an easier way. Mistrust and Timorous, terrifying Christian with reports of difficulties, are like Cymochles and Pyrochles. Spenser's boaster, Braggadoccio, might have formed a model for Talkative and Ignorance; and Trevisan, overcome by despair, for the Man in the Iron Cage. Simple, Sloth and Presumption, Heedless and Too-Bold, are like the victims of Acrasia, sleeping on unaware of their danger. Even Faithful's temptress, Wanton, has her type in Malecasta, the Lady of Castle Joyous, who, in the third book, endeavours to detain Britomart, the Lady Knight of Chastity, and to keep her from her journey. Of course there is not always a likeness, even when the names are similar. Spenser's Mercy is an inhabitant of the House of Holiness; Bunyan's is one of his pilgrims, but both are given to works of charity for the poor.

And Prince Arthur? For him Bunyan has no equivalent, unless Greatheart, in the second part of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' may be thought to play his part. He is the *perfect* man of Spenser's poem, the representation of spiritual strength. It may be that in him Spenser meant to portray the realised presence of the Divine Lord Himself; and of such bright glimpses the struggling pilgrim had very few: he is oftener in the valley of the Shadow of Death than Spenser's heroes. Evangelist, the teacher, is nowhere described in the 'Faërie Queene,' unless the Palmer, who leads Guyon, may be taken as his model. Neither has Spenser any character like the Interpreter; the resting-place most analogous to his house is Alma's palace, where the knights learn from the soul's three councillors, the Past, Present, and Future. Bunyan had nothing answering to the Castle of the Golden Mean—the palace of the three sisters—where Guyon rests. For Spenser would have his Knight of Temperance to avoid any extreme. For him 'too much' was as dangerous as 'too little.' His ladye-love is to be Medina, the happy medium. But Bunyan, himself a man of passionate and strong feeling, would not paint his pilgrim as a calm calculator of expediency. Himself too single-hearted to be an accurate philosopher, he pictures his hero as one who 'runs and looks not behind him.'

The two stories, therefore, in their general interpretation and principal incidents are curiously alike. The order of events is different no doubt. St. George is comforted and refreshed in the House of Holiness *after* his struggles with Pride and Despair and his sojourn in the House of Pride. Christian is armed in the House Beautiful *before* he fights with Apollyon, or passes through Vanity Fair. But in both cases the rest prepares and trains for service, and the final victory of St. George over the dragon, like that of Christian over Apollyon, describes the conflict with the powers of evil in very like terms—the warrior often overcome and yet rising again, refreshed by supernatural help, described under the same emblem, that of the Tree of Life, supplied to the knight in the form of an ointment which gave ‘life and long health,’ and coming to Christian by a ‘hand’ with some of the leaves, which when applied to his wounds he was ‘healed immediately.’ Struggles, temptations, refreshments—all these common human experiences are narrated in allegorical form by both writers. The original comparisons of the Christian life to a fight and a journey come, of course, from the same source—Holy Scripture itself. The representation of the devil as a giant or monster, in himself stronger than his opponent, and only finally vanquished by supernatural help, and of the World and the Flesh, as evil enchanters and enchantresses enticing the heroes from the right way, is common to both works. The idea of the Christian life as a struggle, as a continual effort, is found in both. Then in both, as we have noticed, ‘times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord’ are described under the same figure—that of houses of rest on the way.

But when we come to detailed descriptions of the helps given to the Christian, we find them portrayed under different emblems. The Red Cross Knight receives from Arthur a box of liquor to heal any wounds—the Interpreter gives Christian a bottle of spirits. By both are evidently meant any form of teaching which helps to nourish the spiritual life. ‘Bitter Penance,’ with an iron whip, disciplines the knight in the House of Holiness, and so also does the Shining One punish Christian and Hopeful when they have followed the Flatterer, kindred ways of expressing the need of chastisement. The higher means of grace, also, are probably alluded to by both authors, but they are veiled under different similitudes.

Christiana and her party are brought to the 'bath,' and afterwards clothed with white raiment, and 'sealed' in the Interpreter's house—a figure evidently meant to foreshadow Holy Baptism.<sup>1</sup> Spenser had been thought to allude to the same sacrament when he speaks of the 'living well' which alone can restore life to Fradulio (the deceived knight whom Duessa had turned into a tree). He is certainly speaking of Holy Communion when he describes the golden cup in the hand of Fidelia or Faith; and Bunyan possibly meant to speak of the blessings given in that holy service under the image of the pills 'ex Carne et Sanguine Christi,' which were good to prevent as well as cure diseases, and would make a man live for ever. Both writers speak also of Holy Scripture. Spenser's Fidelia holds in her hand the 'sacred book' which

'None could read, except she did him teach,'

and Bunyan's pilgrim receives from the Shepherds a 'note of the way' to direct him on his journey.

It would be an interesting question for the student to trace the possibility that Bunyan may have borrowed from Spenser. That he did not do so directly is evident from his own assertion. 'It came from my own heart,' he says of his tale. Attempts to trace its origin have all failed—there is no real likeness in it to the 'Voyage of the Wandering Knight,' written in 1310, or any other of its imagined sources. The best critics would call Bunyan original, and yet, even in this superficial view, the resemblance of his work to the 'Faërie Queene' is very striking, and fully justifies D'Israeli's name for him—'the Spenser of the people.' Now Spenser is far too long and confused to be ever really popular, and it hardly seems likely that his work was generally read in the days of Bunyan. Besides, in the early ages of printed literature the gulf between the learned and unlearned was even wider than when certain legends—repeated by bards and troubadours—became the common property of all the nation alike. Whether any versions of Spenser's stories had ever become part of the stock of national folklore, and so become familiar to Bunyan, is unknown. Such a supposition seems the only way of account-

<sup>1</sup> Some suppose the Wicket Gate means baptism. Of course, to Bunyan, as a Baptist, that sacrament would be contemporaneous with conscious conversion.

ing for many of the likenesses. One thing is certain : Bunyan has had a hold on the national imagination, which the poet, with far greater richness of fancy, has never possessed. This is due partly to the style. Spenser uses words and expressions which, even in his own day, were obsolete ; Bunyan writes in the simple racy English of the working classes, and is therefore comprehensible still. Partly it is due to the confusion of Spenser's plot. It is difficult to follow the thread of his story. Bunyan's tale is clear, and its interest sustained throughout—he does not wander off into irrelevant digressions, but concentrates the reader's interest on his hero. Mr. Craik is no doubt right in saying that, *as a story*, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' has 'more interest than "Paradise Lost" or the "Faëry Queen."'

But, probably, the chief reason of Bunyan's greater popularity is that the preacher has more human interest than the poet, and must therefore be more attractive to the uneducated reader. Spenser's knights are mere personifications—Bunyan's pilgrim is himself. Macaulay says truly that the 'Pilgrim's Progress' should be read side by side with 'Grace Abounding.' It is the history of the soul-struggles of a real man, and therefore it touches a sympathetic chord in the reader's mind. The imprisoned dreamer was portraying the storms through which his own soul had passed, and the real people who had helped or hindered his Christian course. It is actual life, clothed in imaginary dress, with him, and that gives life and reality to his work.

Of course the poet maintains a far higher level of spiritual imagination than the tinker. Even when he is writing of contemporary politics, he clothes them in some elaborate form ; his 'truth severe in fairy fiction dressed,' as Gray calls it, keeps his readers far above the plane of everyday life. We cannot imagine his descending, like Bunyan, into those conversations upon moral and religious topics which Macaulay compares to ordinary Sunday-school catechising, and which so hamper the allegory. Spenser is always in the clouds, in the land of dreams. He describes things and people who never existed at all (a hard critic would say who never could exist) ; he himself says that such things might be, 'though no man should them know.' For no doubt Spenser realised the poet's function of presenting *ideals*, of giving pictures of things not as they are, but as they might be. Here is the

root of the difference in the tone of the two books in spite of the similarity of so many incidents. Spenser painted very beautiful pictures from his imagination, Bunyan drew from his own experience. Both meant to portray a Christian man in his struggles in this life, but Spenser drew him as he *ought* to be, Bunyan as he knew he *was*. Both fall in battle—yet are finally victorious : both are deceived for a time—yet resist temptations in the end. The difference is that the falls of Bunyan's Pilgrim are his own fault ; Spenser's knights, if misled, are never unfaithful. It is this touch of more natural and human character which gives the simpler story its power over the uneducated mind, and it is the lack of reality which makes the poet's beautiful romance less read than the plain, unvarnished tale of the imprisoned tinker. The elaborated pictures of beauty have fascinated the scholar, the peeps into an ideal world have fired the imagination of poets ; but Spenser has never become a part of the nation's life and thought in the same way as the later allegory. For the ordinary reader he is most attractive when he is least keeping up a lofty ideal ; when his hero is deceived and misled he becomes a man, and not a personified virtue. So with Bunyan : although his great charm is his naturalness, and the fact that his pilgrims talk and act like living beings, yet when he carries his own special characteristic to excess he becomes just as uninteresting as Spenser is when he described unnatural beings. When the Pilgrim lectures on theology in the style of the conventicles of Bunyan's own day he is a priggish bore, instead of the 'friend and brother' that his author says he was so often found to be. The reader of an allegory does not need moral reflections to be put into the mouths of its characters ; he can deduce them himself from their deeds. And we suspect most of the readers of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' are as ready to skip the religious conversations as Spenser's readers are to omit his over-elaborated descriptions of fanciful scenes and unreal beings.

Such is a short comparison of the two greatest allegories in our literature. As allegories, of course, neither is perfect. But then no allegory ever is. Enough if it present under some romantic form a faithful picture of things unseen, and certainly both the two great English allegories do that. If what we have said will lead readers to study the two side by side, it is not too much to promise that they will have a faithful picture



of the Christian life, its struggles and temptations, its hindrances and helps.

If so, in spite of the greater complication and difficulty of the earlier work, it seems impossible that the lovers of the one allegory should not also delight in the other. The 'Pilgrim's Progress' perhaps is loved from the associations of childhood. It was the Sunday story that opened out fields of imagination to the youthful mind. The 'Faërie Queene' is too long and difficult to be taken up for pleasure in early life (except by such naturally poetical minds as Walter Scott's, who is said to have delighted in Spenser when a boy). If it is read at all by the young it is probably because it had to be 'got up for an exam.' But for those who will patiently wade through its long cantos, the 'unmown grass' of Spenser's verse, as Mr. Craik calls it, contains visions of beauty, and peeps into an ideal world of romance which cannot but fascinate and delight. The poet paints the surroundings of life, its true beauties as well as its false visions, with consummate skill, and his model knights, persevering consistently to fulfil their quests, even if sometimes misled by false appearances, are beautiful ideal pictures. No doubt the Pilgrim is the more real man, for the preacher describes the inward workings of the heart with a profound knowledge of human nature. But the true lover of allegory will find food for his imagination in both books. And if this slight comparison of the two works should lead some readers of Bunyan to become students of Spenser they will find, represented under a beautiful poetical form, much that will remind them of their old favourite.

The chief thought in both allegories is singularly alike. The Christian life as a *struggle*, a continuous effort, is the idea which underlies both. The Red Cross Knight may not stop, even at the Hill of Heavenly Contemplation—he cannot rest in the New Jerusalem until he has fulfilled his quest. So Christian may not make his home even in the land of Beulah: he must go on and on to his journey's end. Both allegories, no doubt, describe places of rest and refreshment on the way, but they are only temporary abodes where the hero may recruit from toil: they are used as helps for work, as Bishop Ken would use sleep—a rest that—

A continuous fight, an unfinished journey—such is the conception of life in both the great allegories. 'Not as though I had already attained either, were already perfect' might be the motto of each. Neither picture gives any countenance to the theory that would make man's time here a time of rest or enjoyment. Up to the end it is all *effort*, and not continuously progressive effort either. Hindrances and drawbacks are represented in parable in both books; obstacles to be overcome, enemies to be subdued.

And in both the final victory is secured, not by the prowess or worthiness of the typical hero, but by some supernatural help beyond himself, which, through dangers and difficulties and battles, brings him at last to the 'haven where he would be.'

FANNY G. MOORE.

## FINNUALA, THE SWAN MAIDEN.

---

NOW at midnight a cry rang from the castle of Aodh, lord of Connaught, and men and women flitted their ways upon the stairway, with mirth within their eyes and on their tongues. For the hour of her peril had passed over Feithfailge, wife of Aodh, and from the hands of the Grey Women, who tarry in the twilight closing about men's days, she had drawn her skein of life unravelled, and with it a thread but newly reeled upon the distaff.

In an upper chamber lay Feithfailge<sup>1</sup> upon the carven bed, with the hair like the curls of the honeysuckle, straying this way and that on the cushions, and her eyes shining with the joy a woman has in her firstborn. On the hearthstone a fire of wood burnt redly, and heavy was the air with the drinks of the wise women, and in a space Feithfailge cried out—

‘By the four shoes of O'Donoghue's war-horse, it is I will be the dead woman ere cockcrow if ye fling not the casement wide, and no more about it!’

Then the girls at the bedside made the long faces, till at the last an ancient woman, who had held Aodh and Aodh's father on her knees, said the wise saying—

‘Is it you, Feithfailge, that has forgotten to-night is the night of the Passing of the Swans?’ said she. ‘Little pleased would they be if light of mortal fire streamed out on their going, and small luck should come to the one that spied on them!’

But Feithfailge broke into a scornful laughter—

‘’Tis yourself has the wit, good mother,’ she said, ‘and the swans would be put to it to win past the cunning in you, so that it is the less I have to fear. And as for the spying, it is no one need look from the window, but a breath of free air will I have this night!’

Then, for the ropes are not yet twisted that will hold a

<sup>1</sup> Feithfailge : *honeysuckle ringlets*.

wilful woman from her way, the girls set the casement wide. To and fro through the chamber swept the night wind, and the yellow torch-flames flickered till the shadows crept out to dance together, and the fire leapt in measure with them.

Feithfailge lay betwixt the glow and the shadow, and a sleep fell on the eyes of the watchers, only Vevina, the ancient woman, made shift to wake by the hearthstone, and rake the brands together.

Then through the casement stole a sound of music, and from the wide distance it grew, till the listening look came in Feithfailge's face, and she lifted her head for the hearkening. Faint and far it was, and with the nearing sweet, till in all Feithfailge's veins ran but the longing to hear it for ever and a day. For the song of the Swans was the music, and to him that hears it is that the happiness that all men dream of, and none may win, comes for a space, but ill-luck after, like the otter on the salmon peal.

Fair and white the wife of Aodh leant forward, looking out into the night. Fair and white were the shapes she looked on, and keen as the blade of a skene rose the music in its sweetness, till like a skene it clove between flesh and spirit, and Feithfailge reeled back in the swooning.

Then Vevina the crone was fain to aid, but a heaviness lay upon her, and she felt a power in the chamber as a voice spoke in the stillness—

'Wife of Aodh,' it said, 'thou hast hearkened to the music of the Swans this night, pay thou the price! Thou hast stolen from the Swans their secret, give thou the Swans thy child!'

But snow-cold lay Feithfailge, and by token Death was speaking the word to her—no hearing had her ears for the bidding of the Swans. And Vevina, peering strangely before her with the sightless eyes, spoke into the silence—

'By the earth and the air and the salt sea,' said she, 'it is little ye may scheme on the babe who lies on chrisom woman's breast. So it is your worst ye may be after this night in vain!'

Then through the chamber rose the sound of a hissing, like the surges beating on the shore, for the word too much had been spoken, and mischief is apt to be bred by that. But the cunning woman had banned by the wide world, and above and below and on all sides of it, so that the Swans in their anger could do less than nothing to her.

Then through the hissing spake the selfsame voice—

‘Vevina the Wise,’ it said, ‘learn by thy wisdom that half is nought but half. Child of Feithfailge, unchrisomed, yet lying in chrisom hold, be thou half swan and half maiden all thy livelong life !’

And with the words a rushing of wings stirred the air, but a cry loud and long rose above it, till the women wakened, cowering on the hearthstone. For a dead woman lay stark in the carven bed, and without in the darkness the Banshee floated, keening for the sorrow on the house.

But the child Feithfailge had borne throve greatly, and Finnuala of the White Shoulders was she named, for white was she as the sea-foam. Aodh cared little to look upon her, for the grief of griefs brooded at his heart’s core, and in a space he drew out into the battle, and in the bed of death lay once again with Feithfailge, and well was it with him.

Then Vevina, the ancient woman, sent the greeting to the men of might in the kingdom, and by the gift of words brought forth in them the will to name Breasal, son of Tadhg, to hold the land for the child of Aodh, when through the hall burst out a clamour, and the running hither and thither.

‘What is it ails the fools ?’ quoth Vevina, with the blind eyes burning like coals as she tottered forward on her staff.

Then through the tumult burst the voices of women, crying that a white swan had sped from the bosom of Meave—foster-mother was she to Finnuala—and taken its ways out of the hall. But Meave it was who shrieked—

‘By the Three Shamrocks, a babe lies in the arms of me, and the hair of its head is white as swan plumage, and the eyes of it are green-glistening as the eyes of the swans upon the lough.’

And at her words the strong men quivered like the poplars ; but said Vevina—

‘And if this it is, the half is yet but half. If the daughter of Aodh have fled as a swan she will in the time of it turn again as a maid. And it is in my mind that as fares the swan-babe so will it fare with Finnuala.’

But on her speech rose wrath and anger, and the voice of swords. For the chiefs saw that the kingdom had fallen into the lap, and each was for snatching it to himself. And while some called for fire for the witch and the spawn of her

craft, Vevina lapped the swan-babe in her mantle, and stole with it from the house of Aodh.

It was by the lough-side the wise-woman sought hiding, and of the willows that whispered to the ripples she twisted herself a hut, and when the sun sank into the water the ancient woman was wont to stand among the green rushes, hearkening for the sound of wings and the voice to which her heart-strings were tuned. Long was the waiting, and the wisps of willow-leaves were sailing in the lough, when Vevina rose up at a cry without ; faint was it as a curlew's thrust out from the nest. There, in the brown, shrivelled rushes, lay Finnuala of the White Shoulders, and the swan-babe had vanished from the hut.

Yearly the willows drew the green robes over themselves, and now it was Finnuala who dwelt with the wise-woman, and now the swan, who took in her room the mortal shape, and Gelges the Swan Vevina named her. No lack of fairness was to either, but the double-seeming and cold heart lurked under the strange beauty of Gelges, while the sweetness of the world lay in Finnuala.

Now while Breasal held the kingdom little dared Vevina quit hiding, for his fierceness against the child of Aodh. But at long last he passed to the dead, and Conn, son of Breasal, sat as lord in Connaught, and no chief in all Erin could better him. Tall and stately was he, and none could speed bolt or hurl spear with stronger cast, and Conn of the Strong Arm could wile the fish out of the water and the bird off the bough by the cunning of his snares.

So, on a day Conn leapt up in the dawning, and off with himself into the wood to a springe he had set. And in his going a sorrow came to him, for the spring of the year it was, and the creatures of the wood and the field and the brook were courting each a mate, but he of the Strong Arm bedded with loneliness.

Then, as he crashed on the undergrowth, a whirring of wings came to him, and to the net he made the haste. But, at the nearing, the sound ceased, and the snare strewn with white feathers he found, though no bird was there. But with the two white arms of her caught in the cords lay a maid, and the gold-red hair hung down to her feet, and the blush on her cheeks, like the heart of the hawthorn, made the whiteness whiter.

'My soul ! but my snare has had the luck this day !' quoth Conn, as his skene severed the meshes of the net. 'Strange bird that has fluttered hither, tell thy name as ransom coin.'

'And Finnuala of the White Shoulders is my name,' said Finnuala, but no word of her kith she spake. Face to face, man and maid stood on the green turf, and Breasal's son could not turn his eyes from her fairness, but Finnuala felt the heart pass from her beyond the keeping.

'Where dwellest thou ?' asked he at last.

'With Vevina of the Lough,' she said, and with that she had sped from him like the shadow on the grass.

And from sunrise to sundown Conn strayed upon the hillsides, seeking for the lough of which she had spoken. To the Lough of the Seven Isles he came, and the souls tarrying there for the end of all things shrilled in thin voices, to know if the snake coiled at the heart of the world had not yet gnawed out its way, but little Conn heeded them. And he wandered to the Lough of the Tower, where the tower, wrought of a single stone, rears itself a spear length above the tree-tops, and neither door nor window to it ; and it is within that the luck of Erin is waiting for him that may enter. Far and wide Conn sought, and night was shaking the dew from its grey veil before he came to a brown little lough lying in the mountain's lap. And Finnuala of the White Shoulders stood by the waters, and at sight of him she trembled as trembled her image on the lough.

And Conn, son of Breasal, knew that the turn of telling the Story of the World had come to him, and to Finnuala must he tell it. Only Vevina, the ancient woman, boded black sorrow, for the hand of Conn changed in her fingers to an eel for the slipperiness, and she feared steadfastness was not in him. Little might she say to Finnuala, for that a woman robes the man of her heart in the garment of love, and no seam has that to it.

Now he of the Strong Arm sent the word to the chiefs that they should gather in the hall of Aodh. At the end of the hall were two seats, and a woven covering spread over, and on the one sat Conn, and none by him. Round his neck was set the Torc of Kings, and the black hair of him curled on the saffron of his cloke, and the bracelets on his arms were wrought with the strong charm of the *Grian-Bheacht*.

And he spake of the mind on him to mate, and pleased were the chieftains, each hoping the choice of Conn had lighted in

their clan. But Cuanach the bard touched his harp, and Breasal's son cried :—

‘By the Collar of the Kings, I, Conn of Connaught, swear to take to wife her who comes from the westward ere ends the song of Cuanach !’

And for a space the harp sang on, and the armed men gazed towards the sun-bed, but Breasal's son leant forward watching, for by his contrivance it was at the signal of the harps he looked for Finnuala.

Then, amid a stir, Finnuala past up the hall ; white-robed was she wholly, and the red-gold hair round her. The length of a bulrush in the river was she from the throne when the music sobbed, dying, and as Cuanach swept his hand from the harp-strings Conn swept back the locks from her fairness, calling on his people to know Finnuala the White for lady of him and them.

Then, through murmuring, dark grew the faces, and Cu, oldest of the chiefs, cried out—

‘By the sun, this is the child of bewitchment we cast from the land long since ; she will be for destroying us with her spells !’

And the battle shout rang to the rafters, and a score rushed upon Finnuala, but Conn the Strong thrust the maid behind him, and the sword in his grasp gleamed as a star that shoots from the heavens. Yet forty to one was it, and borne back was Breasal's son, and tethered with cords, like a bull in the net. And, by good luck, Finnuala fled out behind the hangings, or hard would it have gone with her.

But from now out no rest was on her, for the fear that, knowing the swan-doom, the mind of Conn should change. Noon and night sought she whither the chiefs had borne him, and footsore was she ere she came again to Vevina at the lough.

‘From the sea back to the mountains stretches the bog,’ said she, ‘and in the bog lies the Lough of Loneliness, and one isle in the black water, and on the isle Conn the Strong. An armed band rings the lough shores round, for, by the slaying of seven red cocks, the soothsayers rede, that, if for a year and a day Breasal's son be kept his lone, his love will pass from me. But love's torment burns me, and may but be stilled by the touch of him, and nought but the wisdom in you may help. Oh, by your pulses' leap at the nearing of the man you loved, give me what aid lies in you !’



And the blind crone made slow answer—

‘From the mountains stretches the bog to the sea,’ she said, ‘and in the sea are the Seals, wise above all creatures. And if over the lough you cannot pass, *under* the lough lies a way, and that is the secret of the Seals.’

‘Wirrasthrue!’ sighed Finnuala.

‘Whisht, acushla,’ said Vevina. ‘Once in fivescore years is the Singing of the Seals, when from the four corners they draw, and it is the song that all creatures knew in the world-dawn, the seals are for singing. But save and except the beginning it is clean gone from them, and till again they sing through the length of it, at man’s mercy they will be, and yourself knows the music, for it is that the Swans sing in the death-hour. Vein of my heart, ’tis the cave of the *old men* you must seek this night, for the time of the singing it is. Standing neither on the rocks nor in the sea, sing to the Seals the song, only before the end tie your tongue, till they have taught you the path you seek. But, ere your going, lay your lips to mine, for heavy with years am I, and the Three Shamrocks woven about the life in me are come to the withering.’

Sooth was in her words, for at the sundown the wise-woman lay dead in the arms of Finnuala, and at the moonrise, sore-hearted, the maid wandered on her road.

‘Twixt the shore and the sea she took her ways, and the waves lapped about her feet. Round about her came the sea-women, fain for the living eyes of her, for by them they could see into the darkest caverns, and nought hidden from them. And but by the Rann of the Dead could Finnuala ward them from her, for at the call the dead men rose from the water, and ringed her round as with blue fire. But at the Cave of the Seals they passed, and alone Finnuala entered.

Black as night’s bosom stretched the cavern, and the sea washed through the darkness, drifting to and fro the seaweeds like the hair of the dead. And round about the wet walls light-points gleamed, for on the right hand and left the Seals were gathered, with the eyes of them glittering. Like the horns of the moon were the creatures set, and in the centre one as big as two, and the *Rin-Mor*<sup>1</sup> that was, who rules as a king over his people.

Then a moonbeam struck into the cave, and on the *Rin-Mor*

<sup>1</sup> Erse=Great Seal.

it fell, and at the falling music trembled, for the Seals began to sing. The depth of the sea was in it, and the wash of tides on far-off isles, but as it thrilled it broke into a cry of sorrow for the losing of the song.

Then into the silvered light Finnuala moved, and the song the Seals had lost poured to the stars, as the Torches of the Passing Souls leap up the northern sky. The secret of green plains was in it, and the story the waves whisper to the shore, and a great sorrow, and a wild joy, even as when the stars sang it in the morning of the world. But as the music streamed upon the night it fell tattered by a sudden silence, and through the shadows stept Finnuala, till to the *Rin-Mor* she came.

'*Rin Mor*,' she said, 'tis the lost song you have heard this night, barring the end, but if 'tis that you are for hearing, under the Lough of Loneliness you must guide me.'

And below the white hand of her the *Rin Mor* bowed the head, but silence was all he answered.

'At the least set me on the way, and the song will be the price !' cried Finnuala again, but the Great Seal held still. And she of the White Shoulders broke into salt weeping.

'Weary on me !' she sobbed, 'for ere the morrow's twilight I must wander forth in the swan-shape, and no word from my love ! Thin fishes to you, old man, with the knowledge I crave within, and sorra word to be wiled from you ; may the sons of men be killing you all the days of your life ! And oh, is it I must bear having the love of Conn pass from me like the leaves off the willows ?'

Then, in the rear a splashing sounded, and a voice like rolling pebbles—

'Sure, isn't it but the white seal that has borne seven white seals, and is herself a child of a white seal, who has the trick of men's speech ?' it said. 'Leave rating the *Rin Mor*, for woman's anger is like the crying of gulls, full of emptiness, and we would fain learn our song once more !'

'Then under the Lonely Lough lies your road,' said Finnuala, 'for to the isle you must guide me.'

'How will we know that guile is not in you?' the white seal made answer ; 'maybe 'tis for never coming back you'll be.'

'By token that the song would flow but from lips of true mortal !' quoth Finnuala.

Then over Aodh's child the seal laid a cloke of sealskin, and

into the green waters they plunged. The roaring of the world was in Finnuala's ears, and if by a bodkin-breadth the cloke had slipt, destroyed would she have been. To the fore kept the white seal, cleaving a way, and swift followed Finnuala, and as the water changed from green to brown long roots hanging through it forced them to wind, and turn for the bog's roots they were.

But clear of the bog they came, and through water black as a curse, rose the seal under a green shelving bank. And by the leap of her heart Finnuala knew the Isle of Loneliness.

'Praise on you, seal alive,' cried she, 'and the thanks of Finnuala. Let the sound of the song be signal betune us, for when you hear it, ready and waiting will I be to teach you, through the length of it, and little will Finnuala go back from given word !'

Sleeping on the bare ground Finnuala found the son of Breasal ; not long did slumber last at her voice. The livelong night they spake together, but when the dark thinned at the dawning Finnuala looked in the eyes of Conn.

'Is the love in you the right sort, agra ?' said she, 'for the test is coming to it. When the fairness of my face your eyes see no more, is it faith you will keep with me ?'

'Arrah, Finnuala, distrust is apt to smother love,' said Conn ; 'by the sun's dance, 'tis waitin' to my life's end will I be for the woman of the world that you are.'

'Don't remember to forget her then !' cried Finnuala, but as Conn would hold her to the heart of him a white swan circled thrice about him ere it sped away. And by his side Finnuala was not, but a woman with hair like a silver veil, and eyes where the lights played hide-and-seek, like the wind on green sea water.

'Who is it you are ?' asked Conn looking upon her.

'Gelges am I' said she, arching the white neck under the silver hair. 'But little has Finnuala's love to do with me, I'm thinking.'

'As little as I need,' cried Conn impatiently, and Gelges glided from him, with the eyes glancing back under long lashes.

Now in the first days Finnuala and Finnuala was all Conn's thought, and nought of Gelges did he see, for if he strayed near she past from him with a hissing as of anger. And, for the contrariness of man's blood, Breasal's son grew to think

on her, and on an evening he came on her among the sedges, and trouble in her face.

'What harm is in me, Gelges, that you turn the cold shoulder?' said he. 'May I not ease your sorrow?'

'Tis wearying for my own people, I am,' said Gelges softly. 'Finnuala has the best of it, for first with you she is, and when lonely she leaves you she is happy among the swans, but it is my lone I wander.'

Then Conn felt his loneliness as never before, and lingered, for her speech was of Finnuala, and he failed to mark when it changed to himself. At times word nor look could he win, and he followed the more after her, and the thought of Finnuala thinned from his mind, for the shifting heart is in the race of him. But Gelges the Swan bided, and less she spake, but sweet as bees' honey were her words when she gave them birth. And once as the twain sat on the red heather Breasal's son noted teardrops falling on the flowers, for in guile Gelges had sprinkled her tresses in the lough.

'Is it you that hides a trouble from me?' Conn whispered. 'If a sorrow brings the tears, it is I might share it.'

'You, least of all men,' Gelges murmured, passing from him but he clutched her robe strongly.

'Let me read in your eyes, Gelges,' he cried, and the white woman bent to him as a wave-driven rush. And as Conn gazed in those eyes green glistening, his past sank from him as a stone sinks in the lough.

'I read love, and love, and love,' he cried, catching her to him, she smiling strangely under the silver hair, and troth to her the son of Breasal plighted by Bel-Ain, the living ring.

But on the lough shores a tumult was gathering, for the watchers' word was that a woman was with Conn and they said Finnuala the White. Wrathful were the chieftains, and coracles heaped high with bogwood tarried but the darkness, for the burning of the sorceress and him her magic had stolen.

Now up from the sea a swan came flying, cleaving the night with white weary wings. Over the lough she sped; and beneath her the coracles swam from the shore, and to the isle she came, where Conn the faithless slept within the arms of Gelges.

Then at the sorrow and the peril a cry rose from the swan, and about the tower she floated, beating the air vainly. And Gelges stirred from the sleeping and gazed through the night.

‘Bad luck to the nightbird’s keening!’ cried she wickedly. ‘Up with you, Breasal’s son, and choke the ill throat of it with your bow!’

And while sleep was yet on him Conn arose, laying an arrow on the string. Straightly it was aimed, and straight it sped, and down the air fell the white swan and dropt among the rushes.

But up from the lough stole the chieftains with arms heaped with dry wood, and a lighted torch held low. And the glow of a burning rose about the tower, and ever it grew till the eastern sky pulsed with the leaping fires.

Then from the rushes came a singing, rising with the flames and no swan lay there, but Finnuala, and life-blood on the white bosom. On the tower she turned dying eyes, knowing not that in the swirling smoke Conn the faithless lay dead, and his lone, for Gelges the Swan had fled from his peril.

On the pinions of music Finnuala was passing, for the Song of the Swans she sang in the death hour, and the bitterness of life in it and the strength of love. But as the strain clove the night, the ripples were broken strangely, for one and another black head raised itself in the swimming, and through the lough the seals were splashing softly, drawn by the song.

On through the rushes they came, and the water rose about them till Finnuala, with the song dead on her lips, floated to their midst. The shine of the dying fire lingered on the red-gold hair, as borne among the seals she past, and the lough was lost in the shrouding dark.

This is the story of Finnuala of the White Shoulders.

K. L. MONTGOMERY.

## THE STRONG GOD CIRCUMSTANCE

BY HELEN SHIPTON, AUTHOR OF 'THE HERONS,' 'DAGMAR,' ETC.

---

### BOOK I.

#### 'OF THE THREE KALENDARS'

---

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE FIRST ONE-EYED KALENDAR.

'At the Dawn of Life, by the Gates of Breath  
There are worse things waiting for man than Death.'

*A. G. Swinburne.*

A BARONET'S country seat—one of the 'stately homes of England'—with its great elms screening it from the July heat, and its gardens all ablaze with scarlet and gold—what could sound more inviting in the July weather?

In an estate agent's description, even supposing such a phenomenon as a fairly truthful estate agent, Kenyon Court would have appeared a most 'desirable residence' for a retired cotton lord or American millionaire, if every feature had been duly catalogued, from the castellated edifice that mad old Sir William built and was pleased to call his observatory, down to the sunburned acres of the park and the shining river beyond murmuring idly along its banks of willow-herb and rushes.

But to me Kenyon Court has always seemed a depressing place, not so much from its aristocratic seclusion—though there is no other house near, and the one or two that might have been seen in the distance have been assiduously 'planted out'—as from some inherent peculiarity which it is very hard to define.

Cedars on a well-kept lawn are beautiful objects, copper-beeches too are beautiful, especially in spring. And a well-built greystone house is not necessarily ugly, even when surrounded

by drives and paths covered with grey granite chips and kept without a weed.

No, I do not know what was amiss with Kenyon Court, but I do know that the eye turned impatiently from the dull completeness of the house and its immediate surroundings to find but little consolation in stretches of sloping park-land grazed by a few fallow deer, and glimpses beyond of bare fields rising up to the low horizon not far away.

And if a place looks always rather dull and rather sad it will attain its climax of dulness and sadness when an army of competent gardeners have just done their best upon it, and beneath the glow of perfect summer weather.

As long as the dissatisfied soul can find a saving *if*—if it were fine, if the grass were better cut, if the house were in better repair, if the garden were more full of flowers—there is a certain possibility of cheerfulness in the situation. But perfection is always a little depressing to the human mind; and the perfection of Kenyon Court made some people feel inclined to cry. Especially in July, when the Kenyons were wont to give their annual garden party to ‘the county,’ when the great trees in the park were motionless masses of heavy dark-green foliage, when the garden beds made you blink to look at them—for Sir Robert was old fashioned in his tastes—and when poor Lady Kenyon regarded her numerous guests as though she would have given much to know what to do with them and more to be rid of them.

But on this year of which I have now to speak ‘the county’ had looked in vain for its annual opportunity of social martyrdom. Though it was the day on which that function usually took place—Lady Kenyon’s birthday, I believe—the Court was in its normal state of solitude, and lay quiet under the benumbing spell of a sunless, breathless afternoon.

No living creature was in sight in front of the house but Sir Robert Kenyon and his wife walking in a little shrubbery path at the end of the garden.

Sir Robert was a man whom you could not mention anywhere in his own neighbourhood without being told that he was ‘much respected.’ People are not so ill-natured as it is the fashion to make out, and it is sometimes a pleasure to them to speak well of one who has never injured them in any way.

No one could say that Sir Robert was lively, or interesting, or even very influential, considering his fairly good property

and his diligent attention to public business, but no one could deny his respectability, and respected he was accordingly. Somehow the way in which he was spoken of prepared strangers to see an elderly man, and his manner carried out the idea, but he was really not yet five and thirty, an age at which a man may nowadays be quite boyish if he so chooses. The master of Kenyon Court had never been very boyish, and now he both looked and was well past the stormy, troubled, hopeful side of the hill of life.

The Sir Robert Kenyon who was walking now beside his wife was not quite the same Sir Robert that his neighbours were used to see on the platform or on the bench. Even commonplace men have, as Browning has told us, 'two soul-sides'; and though ill-natured people said that the only person in the world more uninteresting than Sir Robert Kenyon was Frances, his wife, I believe that her husband was very fond of her, and that his soul, such as it was, was an open book to her.

'I don't know how to face him, poor fellow!—I don't know what to say to him!' he was saying. 'I wish to God this afternoon was over! If my poor father had been alive to see this day it would have broken his heart.'

Lady Kenyon had heard all this many times during the last few weeks, but she had plenty of patience, as uninteresting women need to have.

'It will be — less painful after the first,' she said, in her slow, soft, hesitating voice.

'But the first has got to come first, and I wish it was over,' said Sir Robert fretfully. 'And I don't see how things are to be any better after this, or what the poor fellow is to do. He never had any fancy for a colonial life.'

'Perhaps he would like to go abroad — *now*,' said Lady Kenyon. 'Hush! is not that the dog-cart?'

Her thin, sallow face grew a little paler, and her lips set themselves into a sort of fixed, painful smile. Sir Robert looked up, nervously and expectantly, as they heard the clash of the gate that divided the park from the garden, and a dog-cart with a pile of luggage on the back seat appeared from behind the trees.

The groom who was driving pulled up suddenly, and the man who had been sitting beside him sprang lightly down and came towards them across the grass, threading his way between the gorgeous flower-beds.



Robert and Arthur Kenyon were not much alike, as brothers go. Both had slight, wiry figures, but Arthur's was that of a man who has trained his muscles, and his movements were more certain and far swifter. Both had the same rather colourless light-brown hair, but the elder brother wore a small neatly trimmed beard and moustache, while the younger's pale, keen face was clean shaven. Robert's eyes were pale-grey, while Arthur's were very dark grey-blue. Arthur's coat and white tie were semi-clerical, but Sir Robert's country gentleman's suit had an air of more careful propriety and less of fashion about it. And sometimes there seemed to be a good deal more than the actual five years' difference between their ages, for Arthur Kenyon had been very boyish as a boy, and could sometimes be boyish still—though some people might have thought it unbecoming both to the position that he had made for himself and to that which Fate had made for him.

'Well, Robert! how are you?' he said, as he stepped into the shrubby walk. 'How do you do, Frances? Rather sultry to-day, isn't it?'

Arthur Kenyon's voice was so pleasant, so clear and sweet and yet so manly, that it would have made a plainer man seem good-looking. It was the Kenyon voice, and the elder brother had it too, though with less flow of words. Both brothers talked a good deal, but Sir Robert was apt to pause and hesitate as if he were wondering what on earth he should say next—as I believe he very frequently was.

Lady Kenyon held out a limp hand to her brother-in-law's clasp, but her eyes searched his face with an eager, wistful, almost frightened look.

'How are you? Have you been well lately?' she faltered, with a sideglance at her husband; 'we have been—anxious about you.'

'Thank you, I am perfectly well,' answered Arthur Kenyon in the level tones of determined cheerfulness. 'Robert looks fairly fit, I think; but you don't look quite so well as you did in the winter. Do you find this heavy weather trying?'

'Yes, I think—perhaps we do. Shall we go to the house? You will want some tea after your journey.'

Again she looked towards her husband, and Sir Robert seemed to realise that as yet he had said nothing beyond a muttered greeting.

'Had you—ah!—a good journey?' he asked.

'Much as usual, thanks. It is your birthday, Frances, is it not? Many happy returns of the day! I expected to find you very gay—in the midst of your garden party.'

'Oh, Arthur!—as if we could think of a garden party *now*!' cried Lady Kenyon, surprised for once into speaking quickly, then checked herself, warned by the instinct that never stopped her from saying the wrong thing, but never failed to make her miserable when she had said it.

The young man caught his breath and the colour ebbed for a moment from his smiling lips. It seemed as though he set himself to let no muscle of his face move, but in spite of his resolve something like despair looked for a moment out of his eyes. He did not speak, though it was not his habit to let awkward pauses go unfilled. They had been moving towards the house as his sister-in-law spoke, and now they moved on for a moment in silence.

It was Sir Robert who stepped into the breach after that momentary pause that seemed so long.

'How was the country looking as you came down? Much prospect of an early harvest?'

For an instant Arthur Kenyon's glance swept the quiet, peaceful landscape with the hunted, desperate look of one whose endurance is nearly at an end. Then he seemed to pull himself together, and as they plunged deep into talk, in the country-squire vein, a flicker of amusement even played now and then round his lips.

As for Lady Kenyon, she had barely ended her silent reproaching of herself for her stupidity before she transgressed again, as kindly and as unwittingly. They were sitting at tea in the handsome, dusky drawing-room, with its nameless perfume that no open windows ever banished—the scent that clings to old books, old furniture, and priceless old embroideries. And her brother-in-law, missing the silent and obliging lady companion who usually assisted at this function, asked, 'Where is Miss Poole?'

'I sent her away for her holiday. We thought you would rather—that it would be pleasanter to have you all to ourselves.'

The young man's slender, flexible brows drew sharply together. People said that he had a better temper than Sir Robert, who was inclined to be mildly fretful; but if those brows and the flash beneath them meant anything they meant that Arthur Kenyon was easy-tempered just so long as nothing happened

to cross him. But his voice was gentle enough when he spoke after another instant's pause.

'I think we must try to come to an understanding,' he said. 'You are most kind, Frances, and Robert too; but if for the short time I am here you will allow things to take their usual course it will be much easier for us all.'

'That is a difficult idea to carry out,' said Sir Robert, while his wife's eyes filled with tears, and she murmured something quite inaudible.

'I grant you the position is an impossible one. Only a little courageous pretence can carry it through. I am disgraced in the eyes of the world, but not in my own eyes or in the eyes of those who believe my word. For my own sake and the sake of my friends I must make believe that I can carry my head as high as ever. Circumstances have put an end to the career I had marked out for myself. I must find a *modus vivendi* somewhere and somehow. I should once have thought that under such circumstances as mine a man would leave off thinking about his future, but I find that he can no more do that than leave off breathing.'

His tone was indescribable; but you may hear something like it in a hospital ward when a patient who has suffered and is suffering unspeakable tortures tells you in a detached, dispassionate fashion some part of what he has been through.

His calmness was a relief to Sir Robert, while his wife, who, though dull, had a woman's finer ear and a woman's instinct, was crying helplessly and silently.

'And have you already any ideas as to the future?' asked the elder brother kindly. 'Anything that I can do you know you may command.'

'I know it, thank you, but my plans are very simple. I mean to take a country curacy, and my place is waiting for me.'

'A *what*?' cried Sir Robert, while surprise dried his wife's tears.

'A curacy. Yes, I know that I took Holy Orders with a view to something very different; but even in existing circumstances these orders are a fact that cannot be ignored. They seem to indicate a possibility, to point out a new sphere of life, not too conspicuous or too difficult.'

'But surely—something different—something might be found that would suit you better?'

'On the contrary, I think that will suit me very well. I find myself quite looking forward to a life so absolutely new.'

His lip curled with a little smile of self-scorn; and Sir Robert looked puzzled and tugged at his moustache.

'Do I understand that you have already settled upon the place to which you intend going?'

'Yes. I meant to have written to you about it, and then—it did not seem worth while. I mean, I hoped to see you so soon that it was as well to wait till I could explain in person. My friend Markham told me of it. His uncle is the Rector—an old man who has worked on all his life alone, and is now past any work but the routine with which he is familiar. And now his solitude has been invaded by five hundred navvies, who will be engaged for the next two years in making a huge reservoir, which is to supply the town about ten miles away. There are no funds to pay a curate—they need a man who will not only work but who can find his own bread and cheese.'

'What kind of a neighbourhood is it?'

'Hills and moors, in the North Midlands. Fine scenery, and no "neighbourhood" at all, as people here understand the word. The nearest village is two miles from the work, and the nearest town more than ten. Ashden is the name of the village, and the town is Castleford.'

'You will be buried alive!'

Again Arthur Kenyon caught his breath, as if flinching under some keen, sudden stab.

'What better could I wish for?' he asked in an undertone, then bit his lip as if vexed with himself for having said so much, and rose, strolling across the room to look at a familiar piece of furniture that had been 'done up' since he saw it last. Occasional renovation of some well-known article was the only form of change permitted at Kenyon Court. 'The Bishop has been very kind; he has made no difficulty about licensing me,' he went on presently, reverting to the subject that was in all three minds. 'Both he and the old Rector know that I am utterly inexperienced, but they are quite prepared to hope that I may be better than nobody. And as no one else is ready to undertake the work, and the need is as great now as it is ever likely to be, I promised to go next week.'

'Next week?' said Lady Kenyon regretfully. 'I hoped you would have paid us a long visit.'

'Not now, thank you. The sooner I am at work the better. I am sure you will understand that.'

'And where are you going to live?'

'I don't know. The Rector has offered me rooms in the Rectory, but I shall need to be nearer to the work than that. I must stay with him for a day or two and look round; and I shall be glad if you will send some of my books and things after me when I have found a roof to put them under.'

Sir Robert continued to tug nervously at his beard and moustache, and was silent. In a certain way he was glad to learn that his brother had any plans at all, and yet he felt that it would have been better to be able to say to people that Arthur was 'gone abroad.' Even that vague generality would have been less of a downfall after the splendid possibilities that had lain before the young man till lately, than the reality of a country curacy with nothing a year. And Arthur was so preternaturally keen of perception that it was hardly safe to entertain a thought in his presence that you did not wish him to be aware of, still less to speak with an *arrière pensée*. Things were sufficiently hard upon him already, without his finding out that his nearest kin would have been rather glad if he had chosen to expatriate himself.

One of the most familiar experiences of Sir Robert Kenyon's boyhood was that of being a somewhat unsympathetic auditor while his father, with a touch of senile garrulity, expatiated to the chance visitor upon Arthur's wonderful intelligence as a little child, and, later, upon his school successes.

Not that the elder brother was ever venomously jealous, any more than he ever suffered any material wrong from the old man's unconscious favouritism.

He was only aware of being a little bored; of thinking that a good deal more fuss was made about Arthur's doings than they were worth, or than was likely to be for his good here or hereafter.

And now, all these years after, when the younger brother had made pitiful shipwreck of prospects almost as brilliant as anything his doting father could have anticipated for him, Sir Robert took up mentally a somewhat illogical position.

He did not believe, of course, for a moment that Arthur had done what some people laid to his charge—was he not a Kenyon and a gentleman? But he did feel that the whole

situation must be somehow Arthur's own fault, the direct result of having been spoiled all his life. And so, being a very kind-hearted man, Sir Robert was all the more sorry for his younger brother ; so sorry that he literally 'could hardly bear the sight of him.' It was really not his fault either that Arthur read him like a book, and knew his feeling better even than he knew it himself.

I must be brief over the story of Arthur Kenyon's shipwreck—indeed, I have not the material to be otherwise. It was over before he comes into this story, only its consequences remaining, and likely to remain. Some of its details were common property at the time ; and none but those concern us just now.

As a boy he had been too fond of games of many kinds to do quite so much with books as he might have done. At college Ambition applied a keener spur, and he worked hard and well, playing between whiles with a fitful energy that saved him from becoming a man of books only. He became a Fellow of his college just in time to delight his father's heart before the old man died, and for some time remained the youngest Fellow and tutor in the University—phenomenally young and dangerously brilliant, or so it seemed to some of the steady-going seniors whose sublime altitude this young man had gained, as it were, at a bound.

He was avid of work, and indeed of any and every mode of expressing his individuality ; quicker far in all mental operations than most men, and unusually rapid even in such merely mechanical operations as reading and writing. Perhaps, with a little not unnatural vanity, he liked to let people see how easily he could do what cost other men much time and pains ; and the certain amount of liking he may have lost in that way was hardly missed in the general popularity attendant on the possessor of a kind heart, courteous manners, unflagging vitality, and a fair share of this world's goods.

As a tutor I believe it was considered a privilege to be under him, partly no doubt because he was so essentially modern in all his thoughts and ways, and knew so thoroughly the minds he had to reach. Now and then he allowed himself to be persuaded to undertake private coaching, and there was a sort of *furor* for him, a blind confidence that 'Kenyon could get any fellow through'—a form no doubt of that sheep-like instinct that makes young men flock to the

same hatter or tailor—but which was partly justified by results, for Arthur Kenyon could do nothing by halves, and fused in the white heat of his enthusiasm the veriest block must have become malleable and receptive.

‘He didn’t teach you,’ said an ex-pupil of his once. ‘He frightened things into your head so that they never got out again!’

‘It was the very apotheosis of *cram*,’ said another—a brilliant, rather affected youth, who had not loved his brilliant young tutor. ‘He knew exactly what the examiners would want to know, and he made you stick to that and nothing else.’

I suppose there was a good deal of truth in this latter verdict. Arthur Kenyon was no dreamy scholar, no lover of knowledge for her own sake only, and half the secret of his success was his power of divining what was immediately necessary, and of concentrating himself on the matter in hand.

But no one who knew him expected that he would remain content with any mere college successes while there was a wider world in which he might hope to make his mark. He did not write very much—the wonder was that he could find time to write at all—but what he did write had a distinct literary value, and was eagerly looked for. And he had friends among the pick of his ‘year’—men who would ‘go far’ and most probably help to govern the empire some day; men who would know how to avail themselves of his talents, and who would not be ungrateful for any services such as he could render.

Altogether, I suppose there were not many men of his age, or of any age, in Great Britain with whom Arthur Kenyon would have cared to change places—until the crash came.

It came in this way, as nearly as I can gather. A young man, employed at the — Printing Press, was detected in smuggling proofs of the papers to be set at a forthcoming examination. He was prosecuted, and stated at his trial that this was not the first time he had done the thing, and that he had been employed and heavily bribed to do it by the Rev. Arthur Kenyon. This was treated at first by every one as an impudent fabrication, and the only wonder was that the fellow should take the trouble to invent it, seeing that it made his case worse rather than better.

But when the affair became public two young men—

cousins, of the name of Waterlow—one of whom had taken the most recent opportunity of being plucked for his Little Go, came forward and felt it their duty, albeit an unpleasant one, to mention that Mr. Kenyon had provided them before the last examination with 'test' papers which were in every essential respect the same as those that were afterwards handed to them in the hall of examination. The elder, the one who had failed, produced the so-called 'test' papers, in Arthur Kenyon's handwriting; they proved to be, as he said, the same in substance though not absolutely identical. When asked how it was that he had failed, in spite of this assistance, the young man answered somewhat sheepishly that Mr. Kenyon had been very angry with him for doing the 'test' papers badly, though he went through them twice; so that when he saw that the examination papers were just the same he had felt it was not much use trying, and was bothered, too, feeling there was something fishy about the matter.

Again, the men who heard *this* story were ready to scout it as a lie, and yet were not quite comfortable in doing so, for Waterlow was the exceptionally stupid son of a clever, ill-educated millionaire; and already there had been a little scandal in connection with some boastful, ill-judged remarks of Waterlow *père*, to the effect that he would make the fortune of the man who could get Tom through college with credit. Moreover, 'Tom' seemed too stupid not to be honest, and it was pretty evident that he spoke as he believed. And his cousin, a younger but cleverer man, corroborated his story in every particular.

It was in no unfriendly spirit towards their young colleague that the authorities proceeded to make some private inquiry; but the result was not satisfactory to anybody. They established, almost incidentally, the facts that Arthur Kenyon was acquainted with the young printer, Watson; that he had been often to see him, and had given him sums of money that seemed to suggest some equivalent received or expected. And every one began to recall some pupil of Kenyon's, perhaps more than one, who had 'got through,' contrary to all expectation, and had never since, any more than before, shown talents or application of a kind to justify such success.

A small and not unfriendly deputation waited upon Arthur Kenyon, and invited him, as it were privately, to give his own explanation of circumstances that looked awkward.



He had, of course, heard all that was said of him, and had made the startling discovery that men do make at such times, that though he had some friends who would stick to him through thick and thin, with evidence or against it, yet the world at large needed something more than the testimony of his general character, something more even than his word, and at best was waiting, in the face of suspicious circumstances, to know what to think.

His behaviour to the deputation was more natural than judicious. He made no secret of the fact that he took their questions very much amiss, and he answered them haughtily and unwillingly. He admitted that the 'test' paper produced by Waterlow was in his writing, and barely condescended to point out that it was in no respect an absolute copy of the examination paper that followed it, and that his having hit upon the same points for examination might easily be a coincidence. Of his relations with Watson he declined to give any account, except his assurance that they had no concern with the matter in hand.

Then there followed the usual confused and contradictory reports by which counsel is darkened on such occasions. It was said that a dozen men, former pupils of Arthur Kenyon's, who for obvious reasons did not wish their names to appear, had stated that they had always felt misgivings as to the means by which they had graduated. Then it was said that the whole affair was to be hushed up, because others of the dons might be implicated in it. Half a dozen different things were said, and the more improbable the story the more popular it seemed.

I think that the bitterest drop in Arthur Kenyon's bitter cup at this time was the light-hearted, irresponsible fashion in which the affair was discussed; the way in which some men whom he had thought his friends hardly seemed to care enough about it to take it seriously. If he had been suspected of a murder the accusation would at least have met with the respect that attends a matter of life and death; but *this*, that was to his mind so much worse than a murder, this could not rise even to the dignity of a formal trial.

I suppose that the college authorities might have prosecuted him if they had thought the evidence sufficient, but they did not see fit to do so. He offered to resign his Fellowship, and the offer, after some protest, was accepted. The majority of

his former colleagues advised him to live it down and not to resign ; but he knew that there was a feeling in some minds against him, and nothing but their unanimous vote would have induced him even to wait and see what further revelations the future might bring.

So he, who a few weeks before had had the ball at his foot, was now to begin the world again, with a name that, to say the least of it, was tarnished—a name that was so far conspicuous that he could hardly expect to find any niche amongst educated people where his story would not be known.

Thin-skinned, excitable, and ambitious, with a certain 'gude conceit' of himself that events had hitherto justified, he was surely the worst man in the world to get on under a cloud. The men who loved him, and they were not a few, spoke of this thing that had happened to him with 'bated breath' and with a kind of awe, the more sympathetic of them hardly daring to conjecture how he would take it.

He took it, on the whole, laughing ; but he took it *hard*. It was to him such a blow as would have killed a man who had a physical weak point, or driven into madness or life-long brooding melancholy a man whose mind and spirit were not sound. No one, I think, would have been surprised if he had straightway 'gone abroad,' and been heard of no more in England or among civilised people.

What he actually did decide to do was as much of a surprise to his greatest friends as to the brother who had never understood him ; and he never attempted to make his course of action intelligible to any one.

He would not claim for his ruined life that, like Kingsley's 'Ugly Princess,' it—

'Was not good enough for man  
And so was given to God.'

Perhaps he had little thought of dedicating his life to anything ; only the energies so crushed reached out still towards some outlet. As he said himself, it was necessary to go on living, somewhere and somehow. The stream did not cease to flow because the landslip had fallen across its channel—the waters were as deep and strong as ever, and must force a passage for themselves. It was not possible for him, just then at any rate, to take the slightest interest in any work for him-

self ; but the instinct of self-preservation told him that work he must have, and he took the first that offered.

Do they suffer more or less than others, these men who cannot mope or brood : who, in the matter of work, if they have not what they like will like what they have ? Perhaps they pay dearly for those hours of ease in which the snake stops gnawing and they almost forget.

Arthur Kenyon took a genuine interest in all that he could learn of the place to which he was going, and in his own preparations for the life there. No one could have supposed who heard him talk of it that he went as a banished man into exile ; nor was his cheerfulness *all* courage and self-control.

But the horror that he held at arms' length half the day took its vengeance upon him half the night, and shook him sometimes with an anguish of self-pity and sometimes with a fury of self-scorn.

They have a ghost at Kenyon Court, an uninteresting ghost without a story, that just fits the place. It is only an old uncle of the late baronet's, who had no reason to 'walk' that ever I heard of, but who has been seen pacing up and down the dark shrubbery, in the dusk of the evening, or at midnight when the moon is low, for many a night after he ought to have been quiet in his grave.

The fancy took a new lease of life about this time, after having almost died away, and more than one scared rustic saw old Admiral Kenyon pacing up and down between the hollies and the weeping-ash, as he used to walk his quarter-deck fifty years before. It is likely enough that the perturbed spirit that walked to and fro on those still summer nights was in the body still. I know that Arthur Kenyon was apt to look not unlike a ghost as he sat at the breakfast-table in the clear morning sunshine and resolutely made talk for his sister-in-law, while Sir Robert took furtive glances at the morning paper between each mouthful of toast.

Sir Robert remarked to his wife that Arthur bore it very well, much more quietly than he had expected, and that he wondered whether the poor fellow quite realised . . . Lady Kenyon was never by way of knowing better than her husband, but on this occasion she did not echo his wonder. I think that she was glad when Arthur went away, for the pity and sympathy that she could not express made her heart ache afresh each time she saw his face.

## CHAPTER II.

## CROSS RIGG BY STANMOOR.

THE Rev. Edward Markham was a man well over eighty, and he had been Rector of Ashden for more than forty years. In one sense he had preserved all his faculties wonderfully well, but he was incapable of any effort beyond the routine that was a second nature to him, and his interests had narrowed themselves to the limits of his own house and garden—to the trifling events of the day, or of that remote past which to him was yesterday.

Many thoughts came into Arthur Kenyon's mind as he sat opposite the old man, in his dull, stuffy little study that looked out over the churchyard, and listened courteously to his bald, disjointed chat—thoughts that were a kind of narcotic to hungry and balked ambition. It seemed easy here to imagine a time when what had happened to Arthur Kenyon would be of as little interest to any one, even to himself, as those small chronicles of half a century ago on which the old man was dwelling in his musing, monotonous tone.

It was a relief presently to escape and make the tour of the little village, where the children were playing, healthily absorbed in the present—a tour that ended with the grey old church and its peaceful 'kirk-garth,' where the mounds were all over-blown with harebells and wild camomile, and where among the flowers the grey-headed sexton was digging a young man's grave. A greater relief, the next morning, to turn his back upon Ashden and set out to explore the scene of his future labours. He asked his way first of all to the 'works,' and found it easy enough to trace, for the valley at the lower and wider end of which Ashden stood, and the brook that flowed beside the village, were the same across the upper part of which a mighty dam was being thrown, which would eventually bring the narrow, winding vale to a seemingly abrupt conclusion, and store up the water as it came freshly from the hills in a lake, only one end of which would be artificial.

On the hillside, in a large open field, near the place where the dam was to be, had sprung up like mushrooms the temporary dwellings of the busy workers who swarmed over the mounds of earth like ants over their hill. Low huts with fragile walls

and roofs made of a kind of felt accommodated such of the men as could get no lodging within two or three miles, and an office, run up with raw red bricks and roofed with corrugated iron, was perched insecurely on the bank of the stream a little lower down.

Arthur Kenyon strolled round and halted here and there, looking, and occasionally asking a question, with an interest that was by no means assumed for the sake of making friends with the men. He had been a man of books so far because books were the tools that had come in his way, but it was in him to desire the mastery of all tools and to comprehend more or less intuitively what Caleb Garth called 'the nature of things.'

It was a sort of surprise, but not an unpleasant one, to remember that he had made himself responsible for the spiritual welfare of all these hard-handed, deep-chested fellows, who as he watched them at work seemed to him more like intelligent animals than spiritual beings. He knew that such mind as they could have was an utterly unknown country to him, but he was ready to believe that such country did exist, and the unknown had always a fascination.

He could not help at first preferring the work that was being done to the men who were doing it, and he found either more interesting than the question of where he himself was to lodge, and how he was to be catered for. But Arthur tore himself away at last from the swinging cranes and the active shovels and threw his glance over the opposite hillside, wondering which of the grey houses that sparsely studded its wide expanse could be the farmhouse of Cross Rigg, where he had been told he might possibly get board and lodging at a price.

Across the brook he made his way where great boulders made it fordable, and so up the brae by a sort of green lane that wound in and out between crooked, tottering walls of loose grey stone.

The August air was sweet as balm, and yet almost keen, with no touch of sultry heat about it. It was full of a thymy, pungent scent that came from he knew not what; and the fine close grass beneath the wall was tangled with harebells. As he climbed on and up, and the voices of the human ant-heap grew faint and far behind him, Arthur Kenyon put the past behind him too, more completely than ever he had done as yet. Never since his shipwreck had he asked himself whether

he could ever be happy again. Now he even forgot to ask himself what he could put in the place of happiness, and for a brief space lived in the present like any schoolboy.

As he might have expected from the name, Cross Rigg farm was on the very top of the hill, or rather long ridge, that divided the Ashden Vale from another and wider valley to the north. To the west the ridges ended in the long, sweeping lines of a lofty plateau, covered with coarse grass, bracken, and heather, and almost without enclosures. South and east stretched ridge and valley, squares of yellow corn and dark patches of woodland, for twenty miles and more ; and on the far horizon the smoke of Castleford, and more than one large manufacturing town beside, drifted slowly before the soft south-east wind.

Arthur Kenyon gave only a hurried glance at the wide expanse, lovely though the view was, for his eyes were drawn to two houses that had suddenly come in sight. The bridle track that he had been treading had brought him into the sandy, stony road that lay along the backbone of the ridge, just at the point where there stood beside it the smallest cluster of dwellings ever dignified by the name of a hamlet. Two or three cottages stood on one side of the road, and on the other two larger houses, built of grey stone, with heavily mullioned windows in the late Tudor style, and doors and gateways rather handsomely finished off with large blocks of dressed stone and pillars surmounted by smooth stone balls. The style of architecture was altogether more expensive and ornate than one would have expected to see in such a situation, but the odd thing about it was that the two houses were exactly alike in every particular, down to the number of windows and the mullions in each window. And they stood inconveniently close together ; not side by side, but at an odd sort of angle to each other, as though one were jostling the other and trying to push it back from the vantage-ground of the small level space beside the road.

'One of these must be the house I want, but which ?' thought Arthur Kenyon. 'This is not the place where one would have looked to find an embarrassing choice of residences. But oh ! what air, and what a view from either ! I wonder what it is like up here on a midwinter night ?'

A second look showed that the two houses were not so absolutely alike as they probably had once been. Several

small indications showed that the one to his left as he crossed the road was the abode of a little more leisure, possibly of a little more money, than the other. There were curtains at the windows instead of half-blinds, and a few flowers in the strip of garden that the encroachments of the other house had left.

There, then, Arthur Kenyon turned his steps, and knocked and waited, and knocked again, and at last heard a step approaching the door, and the slipping back of two bolts, and finally the turning of a key in a very stiff lock.

‘Do they live in such fear of thieves here?’ he thought, being somewhat unused to country ways, and then the wonder went suddenly out of his head as he faced the person who had just flung open the door.

She was a tall, dark woman, of perhaps forty years of age, strikingly handsome, with a warm nut-brown complexion and fine dark eyes. She was not so well dressed as the servants at Kenyon Court, but her figure would have carried off more unbecoming clothes than her rough brown dress and blue apron; and she looked Arthur over with an attentive, inquiring look that somehow made him feel that his visit required an apology.

‘I beg your pardon,’ he said. ‘Mr. Markham told me that I might possibly find up here some place where I could lodge. I am come to assist Mr. Markham, now that his work has been so increased, and I would rather be near the works than in the village. Can you tell me if there is any chance of my getting a couple of rooms in any of these houses?’

He was in a manner compelled to go on and make a complete statement of his wants and wishes by the woman’s expectant silence. She did not speak until he ended with a direct question, and then she merely moved aside, and signed to him to enter, as she answered in a full, rich voice.—

‘If you will step in I will ask my father to come and speak to you.’

Arthur entered the narrow passage and followed the woman into a large, low room, furnished much as other farmhouse parlours are furnished, but with panelled walls of painted oak. Half the ceiling was covered with a very fine design in moulded plaster; the other half was flat, and plainly showed the trowel-marks where new plaster had been roughly laid on to hide the laths from which the moulding had dropped away.

‘Please to take a seat,’ said his guide, and vanished, and he

sat down and waited—waited long enough to lose his patience and find it again, as he looked out of the window, through its small many-tinted panes, and saw the corner of the other house thrusting itself into view, and wondered who had been those original builders who had such a longing for each other's close companionship as these dwellings seemed to bear witness to.

At last a heavy tread was heard in the passage, and an old man entered. He was so like the woman that it was plain that he must be her father ; and his fine face, upright carriage, and flat shoulders bore few tokens of his seventy years.

'Ay ! Mr. Markham spoke to me of some such matter when I was through Ashden day before yesterday,' he said, when the young man had explained the purpose of his visit. 'There's no house but this where you could be stopping. I'm willing enough, if you can make yourself comfortable. We had a gentleman here before, one of the engineer gentlemen. The women can tell you what they charged him, and if you're willing to pay the same I shall be satisfied. It's their trouble, and it makes a trifle to help buy them their Sunday gowns. There's not much to be got out of farming in these times—if they like to make a bit of money I don't gainsay them.'

He spoke in a weighty sort of way, in deep, full tones, and when he smiled a grim smile as he alluded to Sunday gowns it seemed somehow as unexpected and inappropriate as a desire for finery on the part of the grave-eyed woman whom Arthur had lately seen.

Arthur intimated that whatever the engineer gentleman had paid he would no doubt find reasonable, and asked if he might see the rooms.

'This would be your sitting-room—it's not a deal of use to us at any time,' said the old man, 'and as for your bedroom, it's very handy, you see.'

He rose as he spoke, and opened what looked like a cupboard door, but which proved to lead through an immensely thick wall to a tiny ante-room, the whole breadth of which was taken up at one end by a wide, short flight of stairs.

'Rather awkward these steps, at first,' said the old man, mounting them two at a time. 'What made any one lay them too short and too narrow for a full-grown man's foot is more than I can tell you, but they are right enough when the foot's acquainted with them.'



Immediately at the top of the stair was another door, so low that neither of them could pass through it without stooping. It led into a comfortable-looking bedroom, decently furnished and with a view from its wide, low casement that might have compensated for many disadvantages.

After one very cursory glance round Arthur decided that the rooms would suit him, being, in fact, more in love with them than he would have cared for his puritanical host to perceive.

Who shall explain that nameless attraction that draws us to some places, quite irrespective of any claims to beauty or comfort that they may possess? Have we dreamed of them, or have we been there before, in some ante-natal existence, and there passed through experiences after which the heart yearns blindly yet?

If Arthur Kenyon had not had the power of throwing himself into present interests he would have been a hopelessly embittered man by this time, or a broken-hearted one. As it was, he was able to speculate as to the life that he might lead in those rooms, with a healthy, almost boyish interest, and without going back for the moment to the wonder of his being there at all.

As he left the bedroom, stooping to pass the door, he almost tripped on those curious stairs, which were even more awkward to descend than to climb, and his future landlord clutched him by the shoulder with disconcerting force and suddenness.

'Take care, sir! They say it isn't lucky to stumble on this stair.'

'I should call it a piece of ill-luck to stumble on any stair,' said Arthur, as he recovered himself, but glancing round he saw no answering smile on the face of the old man. 'Why should they say it of this more than another?' he asked, wondering if he was on the track of some interesting local superstition.

'There are godless and heathenish fancies about many a place,' said the old man sternly, and did not seem disposed to make any more relevant answer.

'But why about this place in particular?' persisted the other.

'I don't hold with such notions for my part. I read in the Scripture that our adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and it stands to reason he

may be in one place as much as in another. If he thought there was any place where folks were specially on the look-out for him, there he wouldn't trouble himself to be.'

Arthur Kenyon had heard at college more than one wild speculation as to the enemy of mankind, but he had never heard the strongest believer in 'a personal devil' speak in a tone of such confidence as to his actions and motives. In this prosaic age it rather added a charm to a man's bedroom and sitting-room to think that the devil was supposed to lie in wait between the two, but however keen might be his curiosity as to the origin of such a fancy, Arthur perceived that he must wait for its gratification.

'You have some very near neighbours in this lonely place,' he said, as they reached the sitting-room, and that insistent corner of the other house thrust itself into view through the window.

'The place is none so lonely—there's neighbours both up and down the road,' said the old man. 'But that house there is nought but two cottages now—it's parted in two inside, and one family has the front door and one the back. I'll leave you now to settle with my daughter, for I've my work to see to, and daylight waits for no man. "The night cometh when no man can work."'

He said the last words rather to himself than to Arthur, and strode away, shouting, 'Rachel !' in sonorous tones that made the low-roofed passages ring again.

Arthur transacted his business with no more hindrance than that which arose from the passive taciturnity of the woman with whom he had to deal, and having with some difficulty elicited the information that he might take possession of his new quarters when he liked, he promised to arrive that night if he could get his luggage sent up so soon.

He ought perhaps to have hastened down to the village to arrange for the conveyance of his goods from the Rectory to Cross Rigg, but somehow that matter dropped into merely secondary importance as the swarming earthworks came again into sight. Sitting down beside the moss-grown wall that divided a patch of woodland from a pasture field, Arthur looked out over the brown heaps of newly turned soil and those earth-stained figures that seemed, like some insects, to be taking their colouring from their environment, and fell into very deep thought.

It was not possible for him to doubt that he should do *something* with these men, to whom at present he was less than nothing. The question in his mind was, What was he to do with them ?

Like many another man who has been brought up in a Christian English home, and has not on the whole disgraced his training, Arthur Kenyon possessed sincere religious convictions that were *not* the most vital things about him ; and the curious anomaly of such a state of mind had never struck him, keen-witted though he was. Even those 'Holy Orders,' which he had taken with no idea in his mind of ordinary parish work, had made but little difference in him in this respect.

If some inconceivable concatenation of circumstances had thrown him into his present position before the catastrophe that had cut his life in two, he would certainly have told these men in all honesty that 'one thing is needful,' but practically he would have cared far more about giving them a little more education—about trying to interest them in intellectual concerns—and would have been far more hopeful of the result. 'You must waken the mind before you can touch the soul,' he would have said, and the saying would have hidden from him the fact that he did not know how to touch the soul at all.

But *now*—was it not the wisest of men who said, 'He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow ?' Could all the wisdom of the ages since controvert that ? 'There is not a man among them all, probably, who is as unhappy as I am,' thought Arthur Kenyon almost dispassionately. 'And there is not one of them who could even understand if I told him what had happened to me, not one who could by any possibility have slipped into such a miry gulf. And shall I go about to make them capable of suffering as we do ?—to give them more discontents, more hungers that cannot be satisfied ? A pretty fellow I am to pose as a benefactor of mankind ! What have I got to give them ?'

It was a strange question for him to ask himself. A little while ago, and he would have been sure that his power to give was only bounded by their power to take, that he had in his hands all the treasures of the ages—poetry, philosophy, history—a man's full share of that which all men desire.

And now, was even knowledge fairy gold—withered leaves when once the spell was broken ? It seemed so to Arthur

Kenyon—that he sat there with empty heart and empty hands, wondering how to find within himself even resources enough for the narrower life that was left to him.

Vaguely he remembered men whom he had known—men far less brilliant than himself—who had undertaken such work as this that he had now in view, and who had achieved a success that he had thought might easily have been out-rivalled, by methods that he had never particularly admired.

A humbler-minded man would not have thought of attempting work for which his experience had left him so unprepared; a duller man would have needed to make the attempt and fail before he realised his own ignorance. 'I suspect that the thing needs to be worked out upon another plane altogether,' said Arthur Kenyon to himself at last, after long musing. 'Are men born upon that plane, so to speak, like poets, or can they fight their way to it, as preachers tell us, through much tribulation? Possibly that question is the most important and practical one in the world for me just now.'

After all, Arthur Kenyon's courage failed him at the thought of spending another evening with the old Rector and his reminiscences. He packed a handbag with a few necessities, took a friendly leave of the old man until the next Sunday, and that same evening walked off to take possession of the solitude which he half dreaded and half longed for.

He was beginning now to feel how great had been the strain of those last few weeks 'in the world'—a strain that in a different way had been almost as great at Kenyon Court. It had left him longing for the time and opportunity to face his own thoughts, and yet ready to snatch at any momentary distraction, any trifle outside his own ring of fire that would be merciful enough to engage his attention for an instant.

When he reached Cross Rigg the farmhouse and its strange twin were bathed in the mellow light of the August evening, and the cattle were sauntering out of the yard after the milking, with the tall form of Gideon Elliot following them.

'I am in a hurry, you see, to get into my new quarters,' said Arthur cheerily. 'I hope I shall not be putting Miss Elliot to any inconvenience?'

'If it's my daughter Rachel you're meaning—she's a married woman, and a widow these thirteen years. Her name's Sherwin. Nay, she'll none be inconvenienced. She must

suit herself to her circumstances, the same as the rest of us. Go in, and make yourself at home.'

To take this advice literally seemed a somewhat uncere-  
monious beginning, but Arthur found nothing else for it, after  
the old man had passed on, and he had knocked several times  
in vain. Remembering the position of the bedroom that was  
to be his he reflected that if Mrs. Sherwin was there she could  
not hear any knock at the door below; and with that he  
opened the door and walked in, finding his way down the  
passage to the parlour.

It was quite dusky here, for the window looked east; and  
after a moment or two, with natural impatience, he determined  
to go on to the bedroom and see if any one was there. With  
a little difficulty he found the door, and passed through it  
into the ante-chamber—then paused, for the door above was  
open and a soft red light was shining through it from a red  
cloud in the west, that seemed to fill all the wide, low window  
just opposite. And as Arthur looked up, arrested by the  
almost startling effect, a voice close to the door said  
passionately—

'It is cruel of grandfather—cruel! But I don't care—I may  
have to wait on him, but I won't speak to him—no one can  
make me do that.'

The voice was startling, too, heard at such a time and place,  
for it was in tone and accent that of a lady, despite its  
*abandon* of vexation.

Another voice began to say something in answer, but before  
Arthur could distinguish a word or make up his mind whether  
to move forward or to draw back, the first speaker came  
hastily out of the doorway, and—dazzled perhaps by the sun-  
set light she was leaving behind—missed the first narrow  
step.

The man at the foot of those stairs could be quicker in his  
movements than most men, and so the girl who had stepped  
so carelessly at the top of them was spared a nasty fall.

Doubtless it is a startling thing to miss your footing, and  
then in the very act of falling to be caught in the arms of a  
stranger, where you looked for no man to be. Arthur made  
all due allowance for that, and yet he found something exces-  
sive in the terror with which those large dark eyes met his  
in the dusk of that little chamber, which would have been  
quite dark but for the open door above them. It seemed

like real spiritual fear, rather than the mere physical effect of a sudden surprise.

‘I beg your pardon,’ he said; ‘I had no time to let you know I was there. I had to choose on the spur of the moment between giving you a fright and letting you have a fall. I hope I did not make a bad choice.’

He was making time for the girl to recover herself, and at the sound of his voice the power of breath and motion seemed to come back to her, and she withdrew herself slowly from his supporting arm. She was tall—so tall that her eyes seemed to be almost on a level with his, and they were full of terror still. Murmuring something hardly audible she turned away towards the steps, and at that moment Mrs. Sherwin descended more carefully from the room above and stood beside them. The likeness between the woman and the girl was so strong that it left little room to doubt that they were mother and daughter.

‘Are you hurt, Lesley love?’ said the woman. ‘If you’re not you’d better go and fetch those sheets,’—with which the girl vanished, and Mrs. Sherwin turned to receive Arthur’s apologies for the trouble he might be causing her by coming back so soon, with her wonted taciturn gravity.

‘Is that your daughter, Mrs. Sherwin?’ he asked presently, and she answered simply ‘Yes,’ leaving him to wonder still more at the tone of those few words he had heard, and to vex himself a little over their meaning. It was all very well for the old man to profess that a lodger was for the women’s benefit, and entertained at their pleasure; but it was tolerably plain to Arthur that they had no choice in the matter, and that if they had had their way he would have been no inhabitant of Cross Rigg.

He had hardly realised that solitude was his before he realised also that he had neither books nor papers with him except what he had already exhausted, and that it would never do to shut himself into his rooms before he was weary enough to be sure of falling asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow. Beneath all his surface preoccupation with his new surroundings his dark thoughts lay, like some terrible nerve-pain that only waits till you begin to think of it to seize upon and rend you.

Out again, therefore, with feet that were already somewhat

tired, and this time he turned away from the road that led down past the works to the village, a road that he had already twice trodden that day, and wandered on up the ridge by the light of a half-grown moon.

Before long Arthur reached a point where the road along which he was walking was crossed obliquely by another that came up out of that other valley that lay below the ridge to his right, and ran off along the skirts of the moorland.

And on a little patch of turf at one of the angles stood what he took at first to be a sign-post that had lost its arms, but which the moonlight showed him more plainly as he came nearer.

'*Now*,' he said to himself with some satisfaction—'now I know why this is called Cross Rigg.'

If it had been once a cross it was no longer one, only a slender headless shaft of grey stone, with its lower end let into a socket in the middle of a square block, which again rested upon a larger square, rough with lichen, and seamed by cracks in which grew little cushions of green moss-velvet.

All round it were harebells, colourless in the pale light, rooted between the grass and the stone, which had sunk almost level with the soil.

Arthur Kenyon sat down upon the step, and wondered how long it was since this cross had been reared, and by whom, whether for penance or for thanksgiving, with rejoicing or with shame.

By the moonlight he seemed to distinguish something like lettering on one face of the square block, and he was soon trying by the help of his fingers to decipher it, lighting half a dozen matches one after the other as he traced the inscription round to the side of the stone that lay in shadow.

'*On hym who raysed thys Crosse, & on alle synfulle soules, Blessed Lorde, have Thou mercy.*'

That was all, and while he was still looking in vain for any trace of name or date, Arthur was startled from his knees and from his ardent investigations by the sound of steps coming up the road by which he had come.

A glance showed him that it was his new landlord, Gideon Elliot.

'A fine evening, Mr. Kenyon,' he said. 'Your young bones are ready still to be stirring, I see; and my old bones are bound to be stirring, too, though maybe not quite so willing.'

'I have found a curious relic of antiquity, Mr. Elliot. Is there anything known as to its age, or the cause of its being here?'

'As to age, I can't tell you. There was a gentleman here three years ago that said it was once a cross, and that by that token it could not be as old as the big stones on the moor yonder, which they say were there in heathen times. But, for the cause of it, the old folks used to say that once there was a great fight between Ashden and Lassington—that's the parish below there—and a man was killed on this spot. I don't know, though; there's a deal said by times that isn't true.'

Arthur was not prepared to contradict this very general statement, but it seemed to him that it would be more interesting to hear the local legend from some one more disposed to be credulous.

'I hope it is nothing amiss, Mr. Elliot, that takes you out this evening, after your long day's work?' he asked, turning to accompany the other's brisk, steady footsteps.

'Nay; it's only that I have to see my landlord on a bit of business. And of course he is not to be spoken with by daylight. I'm not sure it's not too light as it is to be sure of finding him, but I'll just chance it.'

The old man glanced up at the moon as he spoke, and by the same light Arthur took a look at him, wondering whether he could possibly be as sane and sober as he appeared.

'You seem to be speaking of something generally known,' he said, 'but I am quite a stranger here. May I ask who is your landlord, and *why* he is not to be spoken with by daylight?'

'Why, you have surely heard of Mr. Redmond Vaughan? Nay, then, he is one whom the Lord has afflicted, and who won't take evil from the hand of the Lord as well as good. Because he's not like other men to look upon, he doesn't choose to be looked upon by any—at least not by us that have lived upon his land and his father's land all our days. A stiff-necked generation are the Vaughan's, from father to son! He sleeps all the day, so they say; anyhow, he's out and about all the night long, and if a man wants to speak with him he must be there about the time he leaves the house, or take the way he most often goes, and stand his chance of catching him in the dark.'



'It seems an odd way of doing business,' said Arthur, smiling, but with a pang of pity and comprehension.

'It is so—but it's *business*, all the same. A long head has the young Squire, and a keen eye for his own interest, and so had his father before him. Well, there goes a cloud over the moon, and I'll be stepping out a bit, for if he gets far from the Hall before I get there it'll not be an easy matter to come across him.'

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE PRINCESS.

'A scent of Eastern sandal-wood  
A gleam of gold.'

It was only the small back drawing-room, or boudoir, of a London house, but just now all the glamour of the East was in it.

It was not merely that the air was heavy with the scent that to some of us breathes of strange lands across the sea, and to some of the Oriental department at Whiteley's. It was not merely even that tables, chairs, and floor were strewn with Eastern curios, and those of a kind the ordinary globe-trotter does not affect—native pottery more weird than beautiful, and strange webs of silk and embroidery.

The spell must have been in the look and attitude of the girl who lay upon a couch by the open window, with one little foot resting upon the floor and an arm thrown above her head, and sleepy, half-closed dark eyes that looked out critically upon a sky that was quite blue, for London.

Her dress of soft salmon-tinted silk was really a tea-gown cut in the latest fashion, but it did not suggest any fashion or date—only richness of tint and softness of texture. The huge cushion covered with pale gold silk against which she was lying supplied precisely the fitting background for the dusky satiny coils of her hair and the warm dark tints of her skin. It seemed as though she had been always lying there, and ought never to be anywhere else, though there were great possibilities of activity about her slim, lithe figure.

She was in fact quite unusually slender, but as far removed

as any Greek statue from that uncomfortable suggestion of the peril of snapping in two in the middle which mars some fashionable beauties. For the rest, women said, and with perfect truth, that Vanessa Carroll had not one really beautiful feature except her eyes; and most people found that those imperfect mobile features combined to form a very harmonious and pleasing whole.

Her companion evidently thought so—a pale, plain red-haired girl, dressed in a coat and waistcoat and short skirt, who sat bolt upright in a high-backed chair, and watched her with admiring eyes that belied her critical remarks.

‘You may talk, Vane!’ she was saying, ‘and of course it does very well for a grievance. But I don’t believe you have work enough in you for it to matter in the least whether you are sent down to vegetate, as you call it, in the country, or whether you are allowed to stay here, or even to go to Girton.’

‘That’s all you know about it, madam! I can work as thoroughly as I can be idle. But it does not matter, I have promised my old dear to stop at Lassington Hall unless they absolutely turn me away from the door. So there’s nothing for it but to work as hard as we can down there, and make the most of the quiet and leisure that is certain to be ours. I only made a little moan over having to tear myself away from town after one brief fortnight.’

‘A good many people have just contrived to tear themselves away easily enough!’

‘Yes, people who have used up everything—but think how fresh it all is to me! I declare I would like to go to—Madame Tussaud’s! But I was never conventional enough to talk of vegetating in the country. No doubt one might find plenty of places and people in the country that were neither dull nor *bornées*. It is only the atmosphere of Lassington that I expect to find inimical to study.’

‘My dear, you create *that* atmosphere for yourself wherever you go,’ said the other girl with a little laugh. ‘And I suppose you always will, unless some old college don takes it into his head to woo you in Greek hexameters.’

‘No such luck!’ answered Vanessa shamelessly, with a little impatient twist that threw her into another pose even more graceful than the last. ‘Not that I want to be made love to just now—I want to improve my mind.’

‘You have not quite got to the end of all that I can do for

you yet, you very uncivil person ! And I have no doubt that you will find some one to supplement my efforts even in Lassington !'

'Again I say, no such luck. To begin with, my aunt—she is really my father's cousin, but he always speaks of her as my aunt, I fancy, in order to inspire me with confidence—my aunt has retired from the world, and never, I believe, goes out or sees anybody. Then her son, Redmond, has only not retired from the world because he never was in it. He had some sort of accident as a child, and I could never hear exactly what effect it had upon him, but it seems to have prevented his going about like other people. So he is a hermit, and she a—hermitess, if there is such a thing ; and if you and I are to see anything of our fellow-creatures it must be on our own account.'

'But you have seen your aunt and cousin, have you not ?'

'Not that I can remember. I was there when I was three, when father was home last. They say that the cleverest people can always date the earliest recollections, so it is humiliating to have to confess that I don't remember that visit at all, or anything earlier than the voyage out again, which I can very dimly recall.'

'I expect your life as a child was too full of sudden and absolute changes. One world blotted out another, and you forgot to be impressed at anything. It is surprise that fixes our impressions.'

The red-haired girl, whose name was Winifred Marlowe, spoke with a musing, thoughtful air that was very becoming to her plain, intelligent face. Life to her was a perpetual endeavour to formulate and to understand, and she applied her intellect to trifles of every day as well as to those studies of language and of higher mathematics which she and Vanessa Carroll had chosen—for the present—as their life-work.

'I think it is most kind of your people to accept me along with you,' she went on after a moment. 'More especially as they probably have, if they are the old-fashioned people you fancy them, the utmost horror of a girl from college, and will be equally at a loss to know what a young lady should want with a "coach," and how she is to do without a maid.'

'Oh, I have no doubt of their good-nature,' said Vanessa lazily. 'Judging from his letters to my father I should say that my cousin was "a man's man"—that is to say, the easy-

going, selfish sort of creature who endears himself to other men by being always ready to smoke or to kill something, and never being enthusiastic about anything.'

'My dear, if he is the recluse you have represented him to be, how can he be a man's man any more than a woman's man?'

'He can have the makings of one, can't he? Don't be dull, Win! I mean that he will not mind our being there in the least, because it will never occur to him that he has any duties or responsibilities in connection with us. But talking of maids—or rather of doing without them—do, for pity's sake, look at this chaos! One would think it was waiting for that army of Eastern retainers you are always romancing about.'

She clapped her hands as she spoke, looking precisely like the beauty of an Arabian tale as she summons to her presence the black slaves who are to spread a refection for her lover, or drag him forth to the bowstring, as the case may be.

Then she started suddenly to her feet, and began to fold up and restore to their packing-cases the various treasures that had strewn the room. And forthwith her appearance and her speech, which before had seemed a hemisphere apart, became more in accord with each other. For the time she was a Western, nineteenth century young lady, only somewhat darker and more slender than English girls are wont to be; and her movements were as brisk as her language was incisive. Oriental form and colour and perfume disappeared into their wrappings; and to a whimsical fancy it might have seemed as though she were hiding away a part of her own identity with them.

Vanessa Carroll had indeed spent more of her life in the East than in the West, but there was not generally much of the repose of the East about her. Those who knew her history might have expected, perhaps, that she would betray some originality, but she only seemed to differ from other clever and ambitious girls in that she was more consciously desirous of seeing and enjoying and understanding the whole of life.

Her father held a distinguished position in the Indian Civil Service, and came of a family that had been connected with India ever since the days of Warren Hastings. It is said that his grandmother was a Ranée, whom that adventurous servant of the E. I. C., Wentworth Carroll, stole from the palace where she was about to suffer 'suttee' as a girl-widow, and made his

lawful wife. But no one is ever likely to arrive at the truth of that story, because in India you cannot question a highly respected gentleman as to a mixed marriage that may have taken place in his family, even when there is royal blood in the case ; and in England we know nothing about Ranées. Only, though she was no darker than a great many English girls, it was pretty plain that there was a foreign strain about Vanessa Carroll, which showed itself mainly in the supple slenderness of her figure and the minuteness of her hands and feet, which were such as no Englishwoman ever had.

Her mother had been a beautiful young American widow when Sir Francis Carroll found her wandering about the world with her maid and her companion, fell in love with her, and married her there and then. She had lived until Vanessa, their only child, was seventeen ; and the trio had been too happy together to contemplate the usual definite parting of parent and child in India. When they were in a healthy district Vanessa stayed with her father and mother ; when they grew nervous about her they sent her for a little while to the hills, and once she went for six months to Philadelphia to stay with her mother's people. Her life had been a continual change of scene, but England had never been a part of the panorama.

When Lady Carroll died her husband and daughter mourned her together heartily and sincerely ; but in Sir Francis's position hospitality was a duty from which he could not long be excused, and his daughter must now be lady of his house, and preside over a sort of little court, of which her youth only gave her more undisputed sovereignty.

It was a gay life, and on the whole Vanessa took it gaily ; but, as sometimes happens, it aroused in her an admiration and desire for its very opposite. Amusements and gay society were to her the commonplace of life ; the girls whom she really thought worthy of envy were the girls who could study, improve their minds, go to college, and learn all there was to be learnt.

These aspirations took form and colour when Winifred Marlowe came out to India for six months' rest and a change after a distinguished career at — College, and the two girls became fast friends. And when Sir Francis planned a tour round the world for himself with an old colleague, and decreed that his daughter should meanwhile spend a year in England, it proved that Vanessa had ideas for herself that did not

altogether agree with her father's old-fashioned ideas of what young ladies might and might not do 'at home.'

Father and daughter were too fond of each other not to arrive at a compromise. Vanessa might not study at Girton or Newnham, nor might she make any stay unchaperoned in London or Paris, even for purposes of study; but she might engage her friend as a tutor, and study any 'ology she pleased; and, though she was to go first to her father's relations, she might, if she could, prevail upon them later on to find her some unexceptional home, in town or near it.

Although her life had been but poor training for any kind of regular work, Vanessa's admiring friend and 'coach' found her both intelligent and energetic. But Winifred wondered sometimes whether the other girl did not desire rather to *have* than to know; whether her wish for learning was not just a form of pride that could not endure that other women should have a faculty or a power that she did not share.

Naturally, however, she kept the thought to herself, and did not love her friend the less; for if Vanessa was ambitious, she was certainly generous and warm-hearted, and even the change from society in which she was a queen to society in which she was but an insignificant unit did not rouse in her any petty feeling of jealousy or regret.

Winifred had fallen in love with her friend, as girls will sometimes with each other, and regarded all the admiration and attention that Vanessa met with as no more than her due. She was too essentially modern a young woman to think that learning would be wasted upon a girl who was tolerably sure before long to make a brilliant marriage; but now and then she smiled a little to herself as Vanessa mapped out months and years of study, and wondered what the inevitable husband would say to all this, and how it could be combined with the round of gaieties without which the 'Eastern Princess' would hardly know that she was alive.

(To be continued.)

## *FROM MY ATTIC WINDOW.*

---

**A November Miasma.** WHEN a pessimism, born in an October-Novemberish mist, sweeps over what I am pleased to term my soul, I become convinced among other dark-hued trifles that this old nation of ours is tripping rapidly to destruction, and that Christianity is making no possible progress. Men and women seem (in this October mist) to be living out their lives without reference to the Sermon on the Mount, to plan their engagements untouched by the strenuous, principles of the near followers of the Son of Man. But the sunshine disperses even November fogs and shows things more nearly as they are. And the sunshine came to-day in the form of a paragraph on Cottage Homes in Cheshire. It recorded the fact that the Guardians of Chorlton, a Lancashire Union, have determined to do the best they know for the children who are dependent on them, and have erected a group of cottages which shall be real homes to the pauper children whom nobody owns. Each of the sixteen cottages is to accommodate between ten and twenty children and, of course, each has a make-believe mother, who might, if she were a heaven-sent woman, be almost as good as the real thing, or even better than some. The group includes workshops, a hospital, baths, &c., kindergarten. The elder children go to an ordinary school half a mile away. They are not to be dressed in uniform to brand them with their own shame of poverty and loneliness, but in clothes such as any children might wear, and like wearing. They will be kept until they have reached the age of sixteen, taught trades—plumbing, shoemaking, tailoring, and others—or fitted for domestic service. Then they go into the world with a fair start.

When I had read this, which has its counterpart in Sheffield and other cities, it suddenly flashed across my mind that these men and women Guardians who had planned this thing were not called philanthropists, they were simply acting as the trustees of their Union and the ratepayers and representatives

of public opinion. Then public opinion in England does, after all, care what becomes of the poor and the helpless, it does try to give the outcasts a fair start, it is consciously or unconsciously a mirror of the mind of the all good, it is consciously or unconsciously Christian. How the leaven of the altruism, which is practical Christianity, has, after all, spread in this old land of ours! It is not easy to imagine the Dervishes in the Soudan planning homes for the helpless or even succouring the sick. The Turk is not notorious for his care of the homeless, parentless infant. But the proportion in which the spirit of Christianity has taken hold of a nation can be measured by its care of others. Perhaps Great Britain and America, and the great world altogether, are rolling nearer to the Sun faster than we guess.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Fashions,  
Drugs, and  
Doctors.** Is fashion—subservience to fashion and the influence of fashion—really a plant that grows of its own accord in human soil? If it is not, if it is a hothouse plant forced on by outside forces, it flourishes remarkably well. And its influence by no means stops with dress. Of course we all know that if we have worn our sleeves loose for a few months it is absolutely necessary that we should wear them tight in the following months. If we have done our hair on top of our head for a year or so it is a logical sequence that it should be done in the ensuing year in the nape of our necks. This principle applied to frocks, ties, and even frockcoats and top-hats and drawing-room furniture is one we take for granted. But I must confess it was Dr. Carr, senior physician to the Royal Free Hospital, who first suggested to me how fashion influences even styles of cure and medicines. He was giving the address which inaugurated the session of the London School of Medicine for Women. Bleeding as a cure for fevers had to go out of fashion because the public believed a doctor was not doing his work unless he bled for everything. Alcohol came into fashion as an anti-febrile, and its use grew to such proportions that temperance hospitals had to be established as a protest. Drugs, such as antipyrine, got into such general use that they were overdone, and often with fatal results. Just at present fashion is running on animal extracts—typhoid extract and anti-toxin, for example. They too would be discarded unless



their use was confined to proper cases. All doctors, and especially women doctors, Dr. Carr ended, should try to preserve a judicial habit of mind, and let fashion go by. 'Beware of prosperity, beware of letting the women doctor movement be a fashionable craze, and so attracting unsuitable women into your ranks. If you do the women doctor will in her turn become a discarded fashion.'

So Fashion is such a canny lady that she spreads her net and catches patent or orthodox drugs, even sexes and doctors in her toils.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Some reasons why.** Like various persons who have become eminent in nursery rhymes and the Book of Great Inventors I felt an impulse to worry out the reason why of this sway of fashion over all our world. One reason the doctor's address suggested. When a fashion is too fashionable it is abused. Because neurotic girls or nervous women took too kindly to the fashion of antipyrine, wiser folk—even the doctor—found it better to discard it almost altogether. That same reason works out in the fashion of clothes. If the fashion of wearing my coat inside out became so fashionable that I met my laundress, and my charwoman and my cook doing it, the chances are I should drop it, or rather turn it right side out. Which suggests that at bottom we all have a horror of uniformity, a very strong objection to practical democracy.

Another point which is an even more potent aid to Dame Fashion is the desire for change which seems almost universal in wealthier nations. If we have eaten beef for several days it palls on us, the sweetest tones continued indefinitely would lead to madness. Twice or three times a year, to say nothing of week ends, we—which means modern men and women—crave a change of scene, of thought, of work, and of food. That applies to those of us who have work and duties. Those who live to amuse themselves get these cravings with much greater frequency, and give way to them too. It is curious that in proportion as a nation gets what we call civilised, so does its desire for changes of all kinds grow. A Chinaman who clings to the civilisation of the ancestors of two or three thousand years resents all kinds of changes as a tiresome and aggressive impudence. The inhabitants of Tibet regard an innovation as a crime to be punishable by torture and death. Oh, we are a quaint people we human folk, always up to some

small deceits and sinful games, and not understanding even our own selves !

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Secrets of the Dark.** The Salvation Army has a way of getting hold of the lurid hideous facts that generally remain buried in the dark slums that breed them, and dragging them into the light of their gazette. The *Social Gazette* has been specially investigating the terrible subject of women's drunkenness. 'Undoubtedly,' says the *Gazette*, 'women are largely responsible for the fact that in the streets of London last year 39,427 persons were arrested for drunkenness and disorderly conduct.' The *Gazette* investigator in the south and east of London found three women to one man drinking in the public-houses. On a Sunday 'you may count them (married women) by the score sitting in these detestable resorts with aprons full of market produce, drinking pots of beer. After closing time (3 p.m.) they stagger home to cook the Sunday's dinner. When this is knocked into shape the murderous compound is taken to a public oven to be baked. The family may dine any time before midnight.' From six to two in the morning the orgie goes on again. On Mondays few women were in the 'pubs,' but there were little cliques of women drinking; one was noticed 'so helplessly drunk that she held a child in her arms upside down without noticing it. Another mother was giving her baby sips of beer from a glass.'

Another story was told the investigator by a decent working man about his own wife. 'She's out at the pub most all day when I'm away and takes the kiddies with her. That little maid there,' pointing to a child of seven, 'comes home reeling drunk nearly every night, cursing and swearing. It's awful to hear. I'm most inclined to put a knife across my throat sometimes.' And while these things are going on we other women eat and drink and play and make merry.

ANNIE GROSER HURD.

## The China Cupboard.

ARRANGED BY CHELSEA CHINA.

---

(For the regulations of all 'Monthly Packet' Competitions, see p. 298.)

---

### FIRST SHELF.

#### CHURCH CONGRESS.

Personal impressions are all that need to be given of the great Bradford gathering which has been so fully reported. What stands out? First and foremost, at the great opening meeting, the sound of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in more than 4,000 big Yorkshire voices. It was even grander than the singing. Secondly, the four great rooms packed with silent, attentive young women, 5,000 in all, and everywhere absolute stillness. On the way to these meetings, and in the press of entrance, *streams* of girls, all orderly, all quiet. It was wonderful. Then all sorts of interesting people—the fine old Archbishop leading the van—eager speakers, men and women; and to illustrate it all and for a background, the great smoky, seething, life-thronged town on the one side, and on the other, speaking of 'historic continuity,' the lovely ruins of Bolton Abbey, with its nave still in use as a parish church. There were the ruined sedilia on which sat the monks of old, and there were pretty fresh decorations for the Harvest Thanksgiving, and there was the Church Congress of 1898 to come and look at them. Surely thoughts of all kinds must throng upon us there.

---

#### VARIETY SUBJECT FOR SEPTEMBER.

'Helbeck of Bannisdale.'

---

Many and excellent papers have been sent in on this interesting book. Sympathies are naturally divided between Helbeck and Laura, but in all cases full justice is done to the high-minded tone of the book, and to its great literary merit. The charm and the very great fidelity to fact of the Westmoreland local colouring cannot be over-rated, and the main characters, whether we like them or not, live and breathe before us.

But viewed as a *problem* rather than as a novel—and a problem is presented to us—it seems to Chelsea China to lie open to two or three criticisms.

1. The problem is the struggle between belief and unbelief, and we do not at all agree with those who think that Mrs. Ward does not see the power of *both* those great forces. But perhaps for the sake of putting these alternatives in a distinct form, it appears as if there was no standpoint between Helbeck's Ultramontaniam and Laura's negation of spiritual power

altogether. Now, of course it seemed so to Laura, and Mrs. Ward may think that no half-way house can stand, but as a matter of fact where Laura revolts from Helbeck's superstition every English Churchwoman would have revolted with her. The English Church exists to show that having a religion does not necessitate venerating the relics of St. John of the Cross. The story lends itself to the 'falsehood of extremes.' Consequently Anglican and Protestant sympathy is thrown on the side of the negation of belief or of superstitious folly. We are not talking about Helbeck and Laura themselves—for them no sympathy can be too keen and vivid.

2. The whole struggle is emotional and not intellectual, between opposing loves rather than opposing convictions, or perhaps we should rather say between opposing temperaments. This is excellent for the story. Laura's wish to yield, and the rebellion of her soul against yielding, really did not need the thought of her father to make it natural. In real life at her age she would probably have married Helbeck, but her soul could never have submitted itself to his. We must, however, notice that the contention of these two natures makes no argument for either view.

3. The suicide, though of course possible—anything is possible when a girl's nerves are worked up to such a pitch—would not, we think, have appeared justifiable to a girl trained by such superior secularists. Courage and usefulness would have seemed imperative to her. We regret that such a book as this should even *seem* to lend itself to the practice of letting the hero or heroine commit suicide because the author does not know what else to do with them. Surely the possibilities of no life are over at twenty-two. The apparent outcome of this noble and beautiful book is despair—despair of faith, and equal despair of its absence. It is *pessimism* pure and simple.

*Lily Lambert's* paper strikes Chelsea China as the most successful. *E. V. B.'s* very good. All are interesting. *Yussuf* and *Miranda* deserve special mention.

---

#### 'HELBECK OF BANNISDALE.'

There are certain things which one makes sure of finding in Mrs. Ward's novels. For instance, a great thoroughness and conscientiousness of work, and an interest in and knowledge of some of the problems of the day—these one knows one shall find before one opens the book. Some people have been inclined to think that therein lies the sum total of the author's powers, and perhaps in her previous works there has been reason for such a charge, but surely no one can read 'Helbeck of Bannisdale' and not feel that its power and greatness lies in something apart from such things. It is as the story of human passion that it appeals and convinces. Not that Mrs. Ward's old characteristics are not to be found here; to say so would be to give a totally wrong impression of the book. We have the old carefulness and almost laboriousness of workmanship, which is certainly admirable and unusual nowadays; and in the study of Roman Catholicism we have exemplified the author's love of a study of some one of the powers and influences that there are over the men and women of her day. But whereas in her former works one has been almost overwhelmed by the studious—or, as some have irreverently called it, the 'blue-booky'—side of her novels, here the balance is more true, the whole more artistic. Now and again Mrs. Ward's love of lecturing to her audience becomes unduly prominent—as, for example, the conversation between Dr. Friedland and his Cambridge friend in chapter v. of book v., which seems more to belong to a theological treatise than to a novel. But this is a solitary instance, and, taking the book as a whole, the study of Roman Catholicism is most powerfully, and with a true sense of proportion, woven into the story. Surely it is a great feat for any outsider to make so com-

plete a study of a position such as Mrs. Ward has made of Roman Catholicism.

Laura Fountain's character seems to be a real creation ; the hungry, passionate, loving little soul lives before one, and one knows and feels her. There is a reality and consistency about the picture of her which makes the drawing of her masterly. Her end is somehow a failure ; the suicide does not seem as though it belonged to any part of the old Laura ; and one can't help feeling that her passion for Alan Helbeck would have conquered and made her marry him, miserable though inevitably both he and she must have been afterwards.

Some people have thought Helbeck a narrow prig, but this surely is a very unperceiving view of the matter ; it is only looking at half the man. No doubt his religion is narrow, though some might rather call it single-aimed. But there is nothing narrow or priggish about his love for Laura ; it is the deepest, truest, most passionate feeling, and surely the conflict between it and his religious beliefs is rather that of a saint than of a prig.

Some persons contend that the book is dangerous from a proselytising point of view. No doubt to some people the Roman system is made very attractive through its sense of direction and care for the individual, and the many rules which in a sense make the spiritual life more easy. But one cannot help feeling as if whatever there is that is attractive in the Roman system as presented in 'Helbeck of Bannisdale' is equally to be found in any branch of the Catholic Church ; and any careful reader will find that Mrs. Ward puts with equal force the inhuman, almost revolting, side of the system.—LILY LAMBERT.

#### 'HELBECK OF BANNISDALE.'

'Helbeck of Bannisdale' is a book which may be disapproved of by many, who will yet find it impossible to avoid its fascination. Once taken up it is next to impossible to put it down. There is a magnetism in it, a force of passionate sympathy with the characters and their lives which is irresistible. The whole book is a fight between Catholicism (as Mrs. Ward understands it) and atheism in the persons of Helbeck and Laura. One is held, as it were, in the grip of a mighty power all through, and as the last page is turned and the grip relaxes a feeling almost of excited exhaustion takes its place. One might be just released from an electric battery.

One cannot help sympathising with Laura, and thoroughly understanding her loyalty to the memory (hardly the teaching) of her dead father and his beliefs, or rather his non-beliefs. But she had been taught nothing either for or against the Christian faith, and one wonders whether the same love which attached her to her father and his ideas would not, when turned into the still stronger and more passionate channel of her love for Helbeck, have compelled her in like manner to accept *his*, as she did the former, merely because they *were* his, and must be right. She was not an atheist by conviction ; she had no attachment to that creed ; she was not a particularly clever girl who needed to think a thing out and deliberately weigh it in her mind before accepting it ; her beliefs were learnt through the heart, not the mind.

Mrs. Ward evidently does not think so, but I cannot help feeling that so warm-hearted and loving a nature *must*, at all events after her father's death, have felt the *necessity* for a personal religion, and that she would have accepted almost the first that came, if not actually repulsive, especially when it was the life of the man she loved—a man such as Helbeck, high-minded, noble, and chivalrous.

Mrs. Ward can see the petty details in the Roman creed which are naturally repugnant to an English character, but while making the most

of them she does not realise the enormous fascinations, beauty, and truth which would by their attractiveness counterbalance the drawbacks.

Helbeck is represented as a type of the highest and best Roman Catholic—a man of the school of Newman. There is nothing petty or mean or lowering about him—nothing, except perhaps intolerance, which could jar on a girl like Laura. He is a perfect gentleman; and her 'I can't, I *can't*,' to his faith, piteous as it is, and real as one feels it at the time when reading, strikes one afterwards as unnatural under the circumstances.

Mrs. Ward seems to look at religion from the *outside*, as it were; she understands the mechanism, can tell where the force is and how it works; but feel it herself—*no*. She does not apparently conceive the *necessity* for a belief in Something or Some one which is as a rule so strong a craving of human nature, especially woman's, and therefore that force is left out of account in her book, and, I think, a mistake made in her conception of Laura.

There is another and greater force which she also seems to have overlooked—the workings of God in and with the individual soul. Can one conceive the prayers offered for Laura to have been fruitless, or the worship of which she was a spectator, if not a participator—the Burial Service over the furnace, the services in the chapel, the devotion of Helbeck—to have been without effect on the girl's soul, touched as it was by love? The lower love, for such a man, *must* have led to the higher. Her suicide is part and parcel of the book, consistent with Mrs. Ward's idea of her character. It was not entirely a selfish deed, but done, one gathers, in a fit of impatient despair of being ever able to enter into Helbeck's religion and jealousy of it. Would it not have been more true and natural if she had at all events *tried* to believe, as she so desired to be able to do, for his sake; had waited to receive the instruction in the Catholic faith, of whose simplest truths she was apparently ignorant, in the hope of being able to accept it; had seized the last straw instead of deliberately sinking, as she thought, into nothing?

'Helbeck of Bannisdale,' wonderfully interesting as it is, strikes as a heathen book, and an intensely sad one. Helbeck himself will do what he thinks right, and find comfort; but Laura—poor Laura! What an awful waste of life!

The pity of it—the *pity* of it!—E. V. B.

---

#### VARIETY SUBJECT FOR NOVEMBER.

Thoughts suggested by the colour Blue.

---

#### SECOND SHELF.

#### CHARACTER STUDY FOR AUGUST.

A Hero.

---

The hero subject has proved interesting, and some very good papers have been written. Chelsea China is going to find room for four—a fine dissertation on Heroism by *Phyllis Debenham*, *Sea Maiden's* very beautiful picture of a devoted life, *Pixie's* smart little paper which is "spoke sarcastic." She gives the prize to *Peter* for the terseness of her style and the clever way in which she shows, without discussion, the really heroic point, namely, self-conquest. For the external forms of heroism must

change with changing standards. The actions of many an old folklore or mediæval hero might bring him into a modern police-court, but the conquest of selfish devices for ease or gain are heroic on whatever level.

It must, however, be admitted that heroism has two stages—one in which sacrifices are made for 'honour' in the sense of glory, and the other when they are made simply for other people's good. Perhaps where the first motive is entirely absent we must drop the term hero, and substitute—what?—saint? nay, rather sharer in the Spirit of Christ.

---

A HERO.

'Kate, dear, I want to introduce some one to you, if only I can find him. Ah! there he is! Major Thornton!'

What was the name Mrs. Cartwright said? Kate Amberley did not catch it, and her hostess moved on before she could ask again. So she turned to her companion, wondering vaguely who and what he was.

A little man with a soldierly look about him—a plain, rather grave face, tanned by an Eastern sun; the scanty hair was grizzled, and contrasted oddly with the almost black moustache which just covered the firm mouth; the eyes were grey, keen, and resolute.

'May I get you some tea? or shall we wait for the next thing?'

The stranger spoke in clear, incisive tones—tones that compelled attention, in spite of the fact that Miss Amberley's thoughts were wandering.

'Let us stay here, I know Mrs. Leigh's playing will be a treat.'

Silently her companion fetched a chair. The last notes of the violin died away, and a rustle of dresses and conversation followed; but Kate and her cavalier did not speak. She rose, and laying her hand on his arm they passed on into the tea-room. Their wants supplied, the two fell to talking of the last war. The major owned to having been there.

'Had you ever seen active service before?' asked Miss Amberley.

'No—never.'

'Oh, do tell me, were you frightened?'

There was a look of fierce enthusiasm on the girlish face, the fighting instinct inherited from a race of soldiers. For one moment the major faltered, then he answered quietly—

'I was more frightened than I thought it possible to be.'

The light faded out of Kate Amberley's brown eyes, and she asked coldly for some more tea. She was disappointed—bitterly so—for something in the keen, soldierly face had fired her admiration; and now, on his own confession, he was a coward.

'My dear Ruth,' she said later to her great friend and hostess, 'who was that man you introduced me to?'

'Who gave you tea? That was the hero of the last fight in the war—Major Thorncombe.'

'And he said he was afraid!' murmured Kate to herself, wondering. Then she remembered the pause before the hero had confessed himself a coward, and she wondered no more. Yet, even then, she did not get the answer quite right.

It was *not* ultra modesty.—PETER.

---

A HERO.

My hero has passed over, and the trumpets have sounded for him on the other side.

During his literal forty years in the wilderness of a moorland parish, where in the winter one of the natives truly remarked that for months at a time we see 'nowt wick (*i.e.*, living) but oor-selves,' few seemed to

see much heroism in his character. Perhaps because he seemed to see none himself, and the world is a little apt to take us at our own valuation. But to a few who knew him the unconsciousness of his heroism was part of its beauty. His appearance, at any rate when it was my privilege to know him, did not betray him as a hero to the casual observer.

There was no sign of the orthodox knight 'like a wave careering, like a sea-wave strong' (which must have been an uncomfortable trait in his everyday character, one would think); he had not violet eyes with lashes several inches long; he was not six feet four in his socks by any means; and when I knew him he was not young. But his little body held a *very* mighty soul, and under thick, overhanging eyebrows were the kindest blue eyes that ever lightened up a plain face and beautified it.

A priest in the Church militant, he waged war for forty years against great odds in a stronghold of Dissent and indifference. With his own labour he made both church and churchyard as fair as untoward circumstances would allow. Singlehanded he served the sanctuary—he was priest, sacristan, organist in one—and in all the forty years he scarcely missed one Sunday there.

Sometimes his friends persuaded him to come to them for a time, but his stay seldom exceeded a 'parson's week'; he would hurry back to tend those few and scattered 'little sheep of God' to whom he was a most faithful pastor. I fear he had not the consolation of seeing many of them appreciate his care, though probably the rough, hard, North-country exterior covered more respect for t' parson, and real conforming to his teaching, than it would ever see fit to show.

Though 'gracious to all ladies,' and truly chivalrous, he had no wife; though very fond of little children he was never a father; highly appreciative of scholarly companionship and witty society, he passed the greater part of his life surrounded only by Northern farmers and their men.

Now he sleeps in the bit of God's acre which he himself did so much to make beautiful; every autumn the heather he loved grows purple near it, and the grouse call round it; and it is overshadowed by the hills.

'Verily the life of a Christian is a cross; yet it is also a guide to Paradise.'—SEA MAIDEN.

---

#### A HERO.

'On Monday last Private Brown of the 9th Lancers was decorated with the Victoria Cross by her Majesty the Queen for his gallant conduct at the battle of — In the face of the enemy he rode back to save his commanding officer, who had fallen in the charge, and brought him safely back within the English lines, thereby risking his own life and receiving a serious wound.'

'There,' said Paterfamilias, laying down the morning paper—'there is a hero for you! That is indeed what I call heroism.'

'Fancy, girls!' addressing two fair-haired members of his family, who were busily eating scones and honey, in which they appeared more interested than in this act of daring. 'Such bravery!—no reward can be too great for such a man.'

Again he takes up the paper, but before long 'Listen to this,' he says—

'The Reverend — of the — Mission, died of enteric fever while in an outlying village, where he had converted many natives to Christianity. His death is a grievous loss to the Mission, as his energy promised great help for the future.'

'My dears, I have always said,' Paterfamilias remarked, sipping his coffee, 'how absurd it is for these young men to go out missionising; they just go down like ninepins. What business have they to go abroad when there are so many heathens at home? (Another piece of bacon please, my dear.) I really have no sympathy with them at all.'—PIXIE.



A HERO.

Longfellow tells us that, in the world's broad field of battle, we must be *heroes* in the strife.

Heroes—are all men, then, to aspire to such a title—a title which we reserve for those only whose nobility of life has raised them high above the ordinary level? Let us consider, then, what it is that the poet requires of us. What is the 'stuff' of which these men are made whom we honour with the title of 'hero'? And first of all there is a quality which must not be missing, no, not even in the hero whose path lies in the quiet routine of daily life. Courage—that quality which is the pride of Englishmen; courage—which has adorned so many of our fellow-countrymen with that most coveted of all medals, the Victoria Cross; courage—which has sent so many of our noblest and best to bring the Christian truth into dens of iniquity and contagion, and to climates which are so often fatal to them. But it is not courage alone that makes the hero. Looking back over the heroes of the world's history we shall find as a prominent characteristic a strong, enthusiastic devotion, kindling them to action and forming in them those noble aspirations which are to bear fruit in deeds of heroism. We go back to Biblical times, and we find in three of David's mighty men a devotion so strong to their lord and master that prompts them to break through the Philistine garrison to fetch him water from the well of his beloved city. It was devotion that kept those simple, trusting highlanders faithful through hardships to the Stuart prince they loved so well, and the cause which cost so many of them their lives, and all the 'hame' that to Scots means so much. And then, stronger than the devotion to leader or country, there is that devotion to the cause of causes, that ennobling, uplifting source of strength which was proof against heathen tyranny and persecution, and made of a martyr's death a happiness and a glory. Such heroes have indeed answered well the poet's command—

'Act, act in the living present,  
Heart within, and God o'erhead.'

But alongside of courage and devotion there must be found in our hero that hardness which will endure, for he is not only a man of dash and emotion. He must be ready when occasion demands it of him to exercise a steady, unflinching endurance, such as helps our soldiers through weary campaigns in the parching deserts of the Soudan, or the swampy, unhealthy morasses of Ashantee.

Here, then, is our hero; the man who is capable of courage, of devotion, of endurance. Of such men is formed that long, long catalogue of heroes reaching from time long past to time present; and what have they done for the world? Used their lives to make it better. One and all, they have accomplished the aim of every good man, they have left us an influence which inspires; they have left—

'Footprints in the sands of time—  
Footprints that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing shall take heart again.'

PHILLIS DEBENHAM.

CLASS LIST FOR SEPTEMBER.

DISTINCTION.

Pixie, Phillis Debenham, Sea Maiden.

## CLASS I.

*Tom Tit, Miranda, Dinah Doe, Amyas Leigh, Fa-ik, Daughter of the Soil, Aliaks, Winifred Spurling, Mabel Poltinghorne.*

## CLASS II.

*Ruby, Scotland Yard, Shower Van, Findum.*

## PRIZE WINNER FOR SEPTEMBER.

Miss Parry Okeden, Turnworth, Blandford.

## SUBJECT FOR NOVEMBER.

A Pet.

## SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER.

*(Appreciations.)*

1. 'King that has reigned six hundred years,  
I, wearing but the garland of a day,  
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.'
2. 'Was it thou—I think  
Surely it was!—that bard  
Unnamed who, Goethe said,  
Had every other gift, but wanted love?'
3. 'Poor, proud —, sad as grave  
And salt as life; forlornly brave,  
And quivering with the dart he drave.'
4. 'The quick Dreams,  
The passion-winged ministers of thought  
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams  
Of his young spirit he fed. . . .  
Wander no more from kindling brain to brain.'
5. 'A ploughman who in foul and fair  
Sings at his task,  
So clear we know not if it is  
The laverock's song we hear or his.'

6. Find another 'appreciation' suitable to stand with the above.

## ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS.

*(These 'appreciations' are all written by one poet of another.)*

1. Dante. (TENNYSON. 'To Dante.')
2. Heine. (MATTHEW ARNOLD. 'Heine's Grave.')
3. Byron. (ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING. 'A Vision of Poets,' ver. 138.)
4. Keats. (SHELLEY. 'Adonais,' ver. 9.)
5. Burns. (LONGFELLOW. 'Robert Burns.')
6. Various 'appreciations' are given. These most frequently given are WORDSWORTH on MILTON—'Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart,' &c.; MATTHEW ARNOLD on WORDSWORTH; BROWNING on SHELLEY in

'Pauline'—'Suntreader, life and light be thine for ever.' Marks have been given to all alike, but Chelsea China would like to point out to a few competitors that to match the set given, lines on and by *high-class* poets should have been chosen.

---

MARKS FOR SEPTEMBER.

60: *Aspley Guise, Blue Wings, Cavalier, Clio, Cymraes, Double Dummy, E. V. B., Eleanor, Isabel, Irnham, Klee, Lenore, Melton Mowbray, Nellie, Syndicate, The Blue Cat, Thorshaven.* 55: *Einsam, Malaprop, Nemo, R. V. H., Sea Maiden, Scott, Trimmer.* 50: *A. C. R., All-Fours, Athena, E. T., Helen, Honeylands, Kittiwake, Penfeather, W. Adey, White Cat.* 40: *Peter.* 35: *L. J. H.* 20: *M. R. A.*

---

*Blue Wings* is credited with 50 marks for a set of answers unsigned.  
*Fourteen Streams* is credited with 60 marks for August.

---

SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR NOVEMBER.

(*Metaphors.*)

1. 'Sun-girt city! Thou hast been,  
Ocean's child, and then his queen.'
2. 'The gems of morning,  
But the tears of mournful eve.'
3. 'Look if a beggar in fixed middle-life  
Should find a treasure—can he use the same,  
With straitened habits and with tastes starved small?'
4. 'The very source and fount of Day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.'
5. 'A little Cyclops with one eye  
Staring to threaten or defy.'

Explain shortly the above metaphors and give their author and source.

6. Give another metaphor from a well-known poet, explaining its meaning.

(Marks for all the above will be affected by merit in the explanations.)

---

NOTICE.—Answers (to SEARCH QUESTIONS only) to be sent by the 25th of each month to *Miss Pridham, Westmoreland Lodge, Wimbledon Park, Wimbledon.* 'Search Questions' to be written outside the envelope.

---

THIRD SHELF.

QUERIES.

If any one would kindly lend me the Christmas number of THE MONTHLY PACKET containing the link between 'The Castle Builders' and 'The Pillars of the House,' I should be much obliged and would gladly pay postage both ways.

Address—Miss M. Cornish, Cedar House, Axminster, Devon.

Can any reader of THE MONTHLY PACKET supply 'Kismet' with the remainder of this poem?—

"And he sang to me this morning as I sing to you to-night.  
There are nine-and-sixty ways of making tribal lays,  
And every single one of them is right."

[See RUDYARD KIPLING'S 'Seven Seas.' Poem beginning, 'In the Neolithic age.'—CHELSEA CHINA.]

### ANSWERS.

In answer to Ein Mädchen, I should be glad to have *Gartenlaube* if we could agree on a suitable French Magazine for me to forward, I keeping *Gartenlaube* and Ein Mädchen the French magazine.

Address—MISS L. A. WEBB, Hôtel des Alpes, Chamonix, France.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—May I make a criticism on the paper of the prize-winner in the September number of THE MONTHLY PACKET? She says, 'It is better to be too boisterous than blasé, *like* so many girls are.' Surely the verb should have been omitted, or 'as' substituted for 'like.'

I have certainly heard the expression used by women, but never, with one exception, by an educated man. I heard it condemned as ungrammatical a year or two ago by a professor of literature.

I should like to know what you think.

Yours truly,

MIRANDA.

[Certainly 'like girls are,' is indefensible. It should be 'as girls are,' 'like girls.'—CHELSEA CHINA.]

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—Will you spare me space for a few words in answer to 'Laura F. Wintles' remarks on Loti's 'Roman d'un Enfant'? It seems to me that, though her criticism may be just as far as it goes, that she has given a most inadequate idea of that very beautiful picture of a child's inner life. 'A prig?' Perhaps so, according to our English views of the only possible bringing-up for a boy, and even then we must blame the protective and repressive education of adoring relations whom, let us remark, the boy adored in turn; but if a prig in small superficial ways, surely he was a poet beneath! To how few children brought up amongst them is it given to see those Corot landscapes; to see them so that in later life they can remember when each struck their fancy or imagination, so as to make it an ever-blessed memory of beauty. To such a boy, indeed,

'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness, but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.'

But though it is not given to many of us to be poets, I feel from my own experience—and what other is worth having?—that every word of Loti's picture of his own life is *true*. Romance it may be, but a romance that was actually lived. I am a middle-aged Englishwoman instead of a French boy; my bringing-up and surroundings were as different as possible from his in all respects; 'prig' I may be, poet I am certainly not; but in all Loti's fancies, in every one of his childish ideas of his home, of his relations, I find an echo of a thought that I have thought. This being so, I feel it a debt of gratitude to him who has so often put my thought for me into his

own beautiful words, to lay this 'appreciation' of his book by the side of Miss Wintle's criticism, so that perhaps some may be tempted to read it for themselves, and may perhaps find in it some of the inspiring pleasure that it has given to,

Yours faithfully,  
'BLUE ROSES.'

## SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

### MELANESIA AS A SEPARATE DIOCESE.

#### QUESTIONS FOR NOVEMBER.

41. Why were the headquarters moved from Kohimarama to Norfolk Island? Give some results—and an account of the ordinary life there.

42. Say what you know of the martyrdoms of Bishop Patteson and his companions.

43. A short history of the Melanesian work of Bishop John Selwyn.

44. What work should the Church at home do for Foreign Missions, and what do you consider the right relations between the home workers and the mission?

Books recommended:—'*Life of Bp. Patteson*'; '*Melanesia*' in *Historical Sketches* (S.P.G., 1½d.); *The Light of Melanesia*, by Bp. of Tasmania; *Pastoral Work in the Colonies*, by Bp. J. Selwyn (S.P.C.K.).

Answers to be sent to Bog-oak, Industrial School, Andover, by Dec. 1st.

#### CLASS LIST FOR AUGUST.

##### CLASS I.

M. P., 40; Ierne, 39; Klondyke, 35.

##### CLASS III.

Maiden Aunt, 7. (Three answers.)

#### REMARKS.

29. *Maiden Aunt*.—Buddhism can hardly be called the national religion of Japan. Shintoism is the oldest, if Buddhism is most prevalent in one form or another. Confucianism (introduced in the fourth century A.D.), a sort of philosophy, should not be forgotten.

30. *Klondyke* does not say what are the hopes of success of the various non-Anglican Christian religions in Japan.

(1) Roman Catholics (over thirty thousand adherents) represent the Martyr Church of the sixteenth century; but the foreign supremacy grates on the patriotism of Japan. (2) Orthodox Eastern Church, still more numerous, has a strong native ministry under its very effective Bishop Nikolai; but Russian influence is not popular in Japan. (3) Various Protestant sects, English and American. Some of these were very early in the field; they work almost unhampered by outside control, but their tendency is to water down definite doctrine, and to neglect that external order which appeals so much to the Japanese. Hence the Nippon Sei Kokwai, or Holy Church of Japan (English and American), has some elements which render its future most hopeful of all.

31. Andrew Shimada is still a deacon.

32. Policy towards heathen customs well and thoughtfully answered. On the whole, to oppose heathen customs firmly—not *vi et armis*—but with tact and gentleness, has answered here. All adaptation and meeting them half-way has given trouble in the end.

## 'MONTHLY PACKET' NOTICES.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The readers of the 'Monthly Packet' are invited to address CHELSEA CHINA on any subject the discussion of which occurs to them as likely to interest others, especially in connection with articles appearing in the Magazine.

## CHINA CUPBOARD PRIZES—

*Variety Specimens.* Prize, monthly, 5s.

*Search Questions (Who, When, and Where).* Prize, for six months taken together, £1 1s.

*Prose Competition.* Monthly Prize, 5s., or 10s., according to merit.

## RULES for the above—

(1) Papers must be sent by the 25th of each month, addressed to CHELSEA CHINA, care of Messrs. A. D. Innes & Co., Limited; they must NOT be addressed to 'the Editors.' (2) Each envelope must be marked *outside* with the subject to which it refers. Papers under separate competitions or discussions must be in separate envelopes. (3) The correspondent's name and address must be written on every paper: the use of a *nom de plume* for the lists is optional. (4) If competitors fail to comply with any rule, their papers will be disqualified. (5) The real name of the prize-winner is published in each case. (6) There are no entrance fees. (7) Prizes cannot be taken by the same person twice in a half-year.

---

[The Editors of the 'Monthly Packet' will feel obliged if All Contributors will write their names and addresses clearly on their MSS., and will enclose stamps for return. Unless these conditions are complied with, the Editors cannot undertake to preserve, return, or enter into correspondence about MSS. Much trouble is saved if accompanying letters are enclosed in the parcel instead of being sent separately.

The utmost care is taken in returning MSS., but the Editors can only hold themselves absolutely responsible for such as are sent to them at their own request.]

# THE MONTHLY PACKET.

## NEW SERIES.

---

DECEMBER, 1898.

---

### *THE CONQUEST OF LONDON.*

BY DOROTHEA GERARD (MADAME LONGARD DE LONGGARDE),  
AUTHOR OF 'A FORGOTTEN SIN,' 'A SPOTLESS REPUTA-  
TION,' 'LADY BABY,' ETC.

---

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT.

'HALF an idea more to the right, please.'

'And couldn't you hold your head a trifle higher while I fasten the aigrette?'

'There—you can look at yourself in another minute; it is going to be a real triumph. One more pin, please, Evelyn.'

The day had come, and already the carriage stood at the door. But it was not around the beauty of the family that the helpers were pressing, nor were they occupied in 'dodging up' the youngest *débutante* to the most grown-up appearance attainable; it was on the passively miserable chaperon that the public attention was concentrated. Of the success of Adela, delicate and radiant in her *eau de nil* crape, every one felt so sure as to make further attention appear superfluous. Evelyn in her pink frock and Philippa in blue likewise felt supremely 'all right,' while on the white-frocked Cissy, who really was only admitted on sufferance, so to say, it did not seem worth while to waste any trouble. It was 'Whiskers' alone about whom doubts moved them,— 'Whiskers' who, despite the black velvet now flowing around her meagre limbs, despite all the stimulating assurances with which her courage

had been kept up to sticking-point, despite even the diamond half-moon flashing in her hair, would persist in resembling a victim decked for the sacrifice, rather than the proud guardian of four such promising *débutantes*.

'If you could only manage to feel a little bit conceited,' admonished Philippa, 'it would give you ever so much more *prestige*. And really there is no reason why you should *not* feel conceited to-day. You can't imagine what an air that black velvet gives you. That feather will hold now, I think. There now, girls, what do you say to her? Isn't she positively fascinating?'

'Oh, Aunt Susan, you look so—so delightfully *respectable*!' cried Adela from the fulness of her heart; and the sentiment was rapturously echoed on all sides. To these young creatures whose half-gipsy-like liberty had known neither control nor protection, this seemed the highest compliment attainable. In truth they were almost as proud of their chaperon as of their beauty.

'Only couldn't you try and look a little less like Ophelia when she gets her muzzle on?' remarked Cissy.

'I don't believe a muzzle can be worse than this thing on my head,' sighed Miss Amberley. 'And if any one had told me that I should yet live to show my neck in this way——'

'It does give one a sort of empty, shivery feeling,' agreed Philippa. 'But I fancy one gets over that soon. Now, let me see how you hold your fan—that's a very important point, you know. And have you remembered about the right way of shaking hands? And I hope you have got a few subjects of conversation ready?'

'Conversation?' echoed Miss Amberley, looking a shade more scared. 'Shall I have to talk? You told me I would only have to look on. As if it wasn't hard enough on me to be out of bed at this unchristianlike hour! Oh, girls, I knew you would be the death of me!' And she collapsed back on to her chair.

'Evelyn, quick—a glass of sherry!' said Philippa with decision. 'And where are the smelling-salts, Adela? She mustn't be allowed to cry, or she will get blotches on her face. Look here, Aunt Susan, you may be as silent as you like, if only you look dignified. And if you feel too shivery I daresay they will allow you to take your wrap into the room; and I don't see any objection to your putting your throat lozenges in your



pocket, it will make you feel more at home, you know. But you must acknowledge yourself that the stocking is inadmissible, and also the hymns.'

Between soothing assurances, sherry and smelling-salts, the chaperon's nerves were restored sufficiently to allow of those final touches, which never are quite final, being given by Philippa and Evelyn. Adela, having been ordered to mind her dress, stood obediently apart, while Cissy, to whom no such order had been given, sat perched on the arm of a chair, passing these last expectant minutes by vigorously swinging her feet, only checking herself from time to time to gaze down at them wonderingly, as though astonished to see them encased in white satin.

'I suppose,' she presently remarked, with the air of a person who has made a discovery, 'that there will be men at the ball?'

Both Evelyn and Adela laughed in a superior manner.

'What a baby you are! Of course one needs men to dance with.'

'By the bye,' added Adela after a pause, 'I wonder what sort of things men like to talk about?'

The information was not readily forthcoming. Neither Philippa nor Evelyn had seriously thought of this contingency. Although prepared in a general, so to say, abstract sort of way to meet members of the opposite sex at Mrs. Thursby's, they were not quite able to imagine what that would feel like. At Gilham men had been almost as unknown as on a desert island, the sisters' opportunities of observing the species being pretty nearly confined to the reigning 'Hottentot,' and to the visits of the doctor and the clergyman; and as neither their bodies nor their souls had required much looking after so far, the intercourse with these two functionaries had languished. Other specimens they knew only by hearsay, or had seen at a distance. What they might be like when examined closely it was difficult to predict.

'Oh, one leaves that to fate, of course,' said Philippa, feeling that some sort of judgment was expected of her. 'And besides, I imagine that *you* won't have much time left for talking. I fancy there is far more danger of your being danced off your feet.'

'I know one thing to talk about,' remarked Cissy triumphantly—'the Zoo! All men are fond of animals. And then

there are all the dogs, that alone makes seven subjects of conversation.'

The ceremony of cloaking and of installing in the carriage was over at last, and with the first turn of the wheels upon the pavement an almost solemn silence fell upon the company. Very still every one sat, very bolt upright, each feverishly clutching her fan, and from time to time nervously assuring herself that her hair was in its place and her gloves properly buttoned, while but for the rattling of the window, the beating of four young hearts must assuredly have been audible.

It was like the awakening from a dream to find oneself suddenly plunged into a flaring, crowded lobby, where tongues ran high and bare elbows jostled each other, and presently to be winding one's way up an equally crowded staircase, where the hum of voices began to be pierced ever more distinctly by the insinuating strains of a waltz, whose notes seemed laden with promises of overwhelming, though only dimly foreseen delights.

Mrs. Thursby's entertainment belonged, in point of fact, more to the order of would-be smart than of really smart dances. Neither rooms nor music nor decorations, nor the majority of the company belonged to more than barely the second plane of excellence. The 'top lot' of mashers had long ago decided that Mrs. Thursby's floor was 'just death on one's shoes, don't you know,' and her oysters far too carefully counted, and consequently had turned the light of their countenances elsewhere. But what could Philippa and her sisters know of the canons of masherdom? When all was said and done it was a London ball, and a crowded one too, and such as it was they found their wildest dreams surpassed. Being in the enviable position of having nothing with which to compare the present scene, they all four succumbed immediately and unconditionally to the charms of Mrs. Thursby's hospitality. They never noticed that if the rooms were full this was partly due to their being small, and how should they know that the flowers had not been hired at the right place or how suppose that the dazzling toilettes with which they found themselves surrounded were being used up in a restored form after having served at more brilliant entertainments? As little were they likely to discover that the silver was plated and that the champagne did not bear the most approved mark. It was all new, therefore all wonderful, as far above criticism as

Shakespeare or the Prayer Book—even supposing the glamour of light and sound and perfume, of fluttering fans and flashing stones, which in the very first instant had taken hold of their senses with an almost numbing feeling of delight, had left their heads clear enough for criticism.

It was not only much more magnificent, it was also very different from what they had expected. Amongst other things they had imagined that the entry of each guest would be a separate incident, and had never doubted that the appearance of four unknown sisters must be the principal event of the evening, instead of which they were scarcely themselves aware of the moment at which the actual threshold was crossed, and knew only by the fact of having shaken hands with their hostess that they had reached the centre of the entertainment. It was only when after a few anxious minutes the comparatively safe haven of a corner had been reached, that the sisters, ranged a little breathless against the wall—for chairs were scarce in the dancing-room—were able to attempt a review of the situation.

An abrupt loss of the sense of personal importance was the first sensation they were aware of experiencing, but with so much to look at and listen to there was no time for reflecting on the subject. It was strange, certainly, that no one seemed to notice them yet, but in truth they had almost ceased noticing themselves; for the moment they had lost sight of their own persons in delighted contemplation of the scene before them. Philippa alone, despite the delicious flurry, remained vaguely conscious of a certain sense of responsibility which pressed her to keep as much of her attention as she could spare from the room for Adela, of whose immediate triumph it was difficult to doubt. Strange, surely! Here had they been fully five minutes in the room and Adela was not dancing yet. Somehow Philippa had expected that at the very door there would be a free fight for her sister; she had fully looked to seeing her half torn to pieces by eager partners, and here she stood after five minutes, still unclaimed. It was astonishing, but not nearly so astonishing in reality as it could have appeared by anticipation, for here, where to her dazzled eyes almost everybody seemed to be beautiful and everybody well dressed, it was almost conceivable that even an Adela should be overlooked.

Ten minutes passed and still the four smiling wallflowers

stood in their places, as unlike the typical ballroom plant as possible, and serenely unaware of anything unenviable in their position. It was Cissy who first left the ranks, not to dance, but to take a turn with Maggie Wheeler, who in an interval between two dances had swooped down upon her 'darling Cis.' And presently Philippa, rousing herself from watching the preparations for a square dance, missed Adela from the row, and caught sight of her again taking place radiantly in the quadrille, beside a big, ugly, gooseberry-eyed man, with a pug-dog nose, and a slow, lounsy sort of manner. It was not the sort of partner that Philippa had dreamt of for her sister—nothing but a real fairy-tale prince would be good enough for Adela, but at any rate it was a beginning, and who knows what might come after?

'Rather slow to-night, don't you think?' had been the opening remark of Adela's partner as they took their places.

'Slow?' Adela raised her blue eyes with such reproachful wonder to his face that he almost felt a little ashamed of himself, without quite knowing why; also he had not before noticed how very blue the eyes were.

Philippa and Evelyn were now standing together, surrounded by a few other wallflowers—for indeed Mrs. Thursby was ill supplied with young men—and who were bearing their lot far less cheerfully than the two *débutante* sisters. It was not until after another dance had passed that their hostess, in a desperate effort to come up to her duty, brought up a young man and, presenting him to the sisters, retreated again with a glance which clearly said, 'This is all I can do for the moment; you must just divide him between you as best you can!'

'Oh, Evelyn, you take him!' said Philippa quickly and unceremoniously, and acting merely on the instinct of habit. To give up her share of dancing seemed to her as much a matter of course as to give up her share of marmalade or of sash ribbon had always been.

'I like looking on just as well,' she barefacedly assured Evelyn.

The young man looked as though he would rather have danced with the elder sister, but his opinion not being asked, and he himself being youthfully helpless, he allowed himself unmurmuringly to be turned over to the other, and Philippa was left alone among the strangers, still with that inextin-

guishable smile on her lips. The evening was turning out better than she had hoped at first sight ; Evelyn and Adela were both dancing, and Cissy must evidently be enjoying herself somewhere since she had not reappeared.

And in truth Cissy was enjoying herself, and this at one of the *buffets*, to which she had drifted as though by instinct, in Maggie Wheeler's company. It was only now that the evening began for her, for, to say the truth, she had hitherto been feeling supremely uncomfortable. Long dresses and low dresses have decided inconveniences when worn for the first time, and are hampering in various ways, but all these drawbacks were forgotten in presence of this choice of cakes and ices, and these piles of *marrons glacés*, even though these latter might be a trifle stale. Into such a paradise of sweetmeats she had never even hoped to be transported, and found it so difficult to tear herself away that Maggie Wheeler, impatient to get back to the dancing-room, ended by leaving her stranded there, not alone though, for, being as anxious to oblige Cissy as to dance, she had managed to capture one of the few real mashers agoing for her newly adopted friend.

'A first-rate dancer when he chooses,' she whispered in Cissy's ear, as she retreated on the arm of her own partner.

'Round or square?' drawled the exquisite one loftily, surveying through his eyeglass the partner thus forced upon him.

Cissy raised her grateful eyes to her new acquaintance.

'Oh, the square ones, if you please—those with the pink icing on the top.'

The masher's eyeglass dropped together with his jaw.

'Oh, aw, is it the cakes you are speaking of?'

But in another moment he had recovered himself.

'If you are not anxious to dance we may as well forage for some supper,' he said with something that almost resembled animation.

Personally he greatly preferred eating to dancing, and had only yielded to-night to his hostess's urgent entreaties. Since, however, he had met with what seemed to be a congenial spirit it would have been foolish not to make use of the providential circumstance. So presently Cissy marched off on his arm to be introduced to her first lobster salad.

In the midst of all this Mrs. Wheeler was not unmindful of her resolution of 'keeping up' with the Vennings. While

Cissy was eating her lobster salad she was spying for an opportunity of finding a partner for the solitary Philippa. When a dark-haired, florid man of uncertain age, and with small, unquiet eyes passed by, she seemed to see her chance.

'Jack Hilbury!' she called so resoundingly that he could not possibly feign not to hear. 'Come along here this minute; I've got something for you.'

'Something nice, I hope?' queried the middle-aged young man, as he smilingly drew near.

'Something very nice. Look across there in the dancing-room, that fair-haired girl in blue by the wall; *she's* nice enough, isn't she? And what is nicer still is that she has got three or four thousand a year of her own. I'm not quite sure which, but anyhow a lot. They've just inherited from some millionaire uncle or other, I'm not clear about that part of the matter, but anyway they're rich. Isn't that something in your line? Nobody knows them yet, and she's just dying to dance, so now's your chance.'

'She is nice to look at,' agreed Mr. Hilbury, having carefully surveyed Philippa through the open doorway, "but are you sure about the thousands?'

'Naturally. Her sister told my Maggie all about it. What better authority can you have?'

'She has got sisters, then?'

'Yes, three; there are four of them.'

'And they divide the thousands between them?'

'No, they don't, you stupid man. The uncle, or cousin, or whoever he was, has provided for each separately—three thousand a year at least, it may be five thousand, for anything I know; indeed, to judge from the plans they are making I should say that it cannot well be less than five.'

Not that Mrs. Wheeler believed this herself, but only that she was anxious to give Philippa a partner, and knew the fish she was angling for.

'Then apparently there's a choice of heiresses, and it needn't just be this one. I think I'll take a look at the others first. How about family appendages, by the bye?'

'Nothing but an old aunt, the most harmless creature imaginable. Now do go and dance with her, like a good creature.'

'With the aunt? I think I would rather dance with the niece. But all the same I think I *will* approach the old lady

first, just to have a little conversation, you know. If she's as harmless as you say it will not be hard to find out a little more from her.'

Miss Amberley, modestly crushed into the welcome seclusion of a palm-shaded nook, was presently startled out of her comparative security by the approach of Mrs. Wheeler in the company of a smiling, lively looking stranger, who effusively inquired whether she would not care to take some refreshment. Miss Amberley could not think of eating at this unchristian-like hour, as she despondingly explained, but the suggestion of a cup of tea made her see a hope of keeping awake, for, the first flurry once over, an irresistible drowsiness had descended upon her; already the diamond half-moon had given two suspicious forward jerks. But this new episode chased sleep far, and presently she found herself supplied with tea by this unlooked for, and to her unexplained serving-knight, who, taking place beside her, entered so easily and agreeably into conversation that the first acuteness of her terror began perforce to calm down.

'Not used to late hours? I can quite understand that,' he agreed with another smile, or rather with only the continuation of the one with which he had first addressed her, for Mr. Hilbury was one of those effusively inclined men who may be said scarcely to take their breath between their smiles.

'Mrs. Wheeler tells me that you have lived principally in the country hitherto. Now I should not be at all surprised to hear you say that you prefer country life to town life, even at this season.'

'The Lord knows I do! I'm not a society woman, Mr. — Mr. —'

'No, that you're not,' reflected Mr. Hilbury, within his own mind. 'But that velvet cost thirty shillings a yard, all the same, and I'm blanked if those diamonds are not real.'

'There is time enough to learn,' he remarked aloud, in his much-appreciated, playful manner, the one that he had always found the most successful with either aunts or mammas.

'At my age! Oh, Mr. — Mr. —'

'Hilbury. Age is a thing never mentioned in London, Miss Amberley; allow me to be your mentor in this one point, and allow me also to remark that for *you* to talk of age in this retrospective tone suggests a quality not generally imported from the country—in other words, affectation.'

Although Miss Amberley did not quite follow the intricacies of the remark, she did so enough to feel an acute return of the flurry with which she had entered the room.

'You are suffering from the heat,' remarked her smiling cavalier. 'Allow me to fan you.'

He was doing it already, without having waited for her leave, and with eyes, into which he seemed to have put at least half of his soul, fixed on her bewildered face. Miss Amberley could not know that this somewhat over-ripe Don Juan had become so used, from mere force of habit, to transferring his soul, or as much of it as he possessed, to his eyes, that he had ended by not being able to keep it out of them when looking not merely at an old woman, but even at an old man or, for the matter of that, at the ceiling or a pair of boots. Under the liveliness of the gaze fixed upon her her wits began to get confused. Wild, awful possibilities flitted through her brain. She had been assured that very evening that she was positively fascinating—was it indeed possible that the black velvet had so transformed her that her middle-aged charms came in danger of subjugating this most amiable but somewhat too aggressive man? She could think of no other explanation, and at the thought of the many eyes of the passers-by felt ready to sink straight through Mrs. Thursby's floor.

'I really don't want fanning,' she stammered at last. 'I—I am not used to it, Mr.——'

'Hilbury. But call me Jack; that's what I'm accustomed to.'

This was too much. Miss Amberley sank back speechless in her chair.

'Everybody does so,' said Mr. Hilbury encouragingly, but the old maid was not so easily reassured. To her ignorance of fashionable familiarities a Christian name was unavoidably associated with tenderness. In answer to the question as to why she had never visited London before—put in a tone which implied that London had suffered a grievous wrong thereby—she could manage only to stammer something about 'not by choice' and 'altered circumstances.' Upon which Mr. Hilbury assured her that he could well believe that the care of four heiresses was a heavy task, for which only a true sense of duty had given her the force, and then paused to see whether she would deny the main fact.

But there came no denial; only a fresh lament on her posi-



tion. So far, therefore, Mrs. Wheeler's information seemed to be correct.

'And do you not find it hard to control the expenditure?' he next asked cautiously, his small, watchful eyes still upon her face. 'Such sudden accesses of fortune so often upset all reasonable calculation.'

'I don't find it difficult to control,' truthfully answered Miss Amberley, forgetting her flurry in her grievance; 'I simply don't control it. The way the money goes makes my head turn at times; but, thank God, there seems to be plenty of it!'

'Ah?'

The watching eyes brightened perceptibly. 'Well, on four thousand pounds a year a girl certainly can do a good deal, even nowadays.'

He looked at her inquiringly, but Miss Amberley was twisting at her gloves in rare perplexity. To let him see that she was in truth as ignorant as he on this point appeared to be the only thing that would never do. There would be an absurdity in such a confession of which she could not help being acutely aware. Never having been initiated into the mysteries of the Lugdale legacy, and judging from the expenditure she saw daily around her it was even quite possible that Mr. Hilbury's surmise was correct.

'Yes, it's a lot of money,' she said, with a hopeless sigh, intent on committing herself to nothing. 'And I do think their uncle cannot have been in quite his right mind when he left them all that heap.'

'Allow me to fetch you another cup of tea,' said Mr. Hilbury, with an additional slice of soul appearing in his eyes. 'No trouble at all, I assure you. You can't imagine what a pleasure it is to me to serve you.'

In spite of this pleasure, however, he had soon found a way of exchanging the aunt for the niece. There were four nieces to choose from, as he had heard, but the other three were lost in the crowd, and it was best to waste no time, in case of the remaining heiress being snapped up. There would always be time to make an exchange later on, if he liked the look of another one better.

'I may have a waltz, may I not?' he asked almost humbly as he made his bow.

'Oh, you may have anything you like,' answered Philippa, smiling at him radiantly, not because she found his appearance

particularly to her taste, but out of sheer delight at everything and everybody. 'It doesn't matter whether it's a waltz or a polka,' she added conscientiously, 'because I can't dance either properly, at least not in the real London way, though I've been practising all week with a chair.'

'Why with a chair?' asked Mr. Hilbury, finding it ever so much pleasanter now to put his soul into his eyes.

'Because one of us had to play—we're four, you know—and the two others danced together, so, of course, I had to do with a chair. I got on pretty well, but you're the first live man I've danced with; why aren't we beginning?'

'You're not at all *blasé*, I see,' remarked Mr. Hilbury, taking a closer and more eager look at the animated face, and beginning to feel less anxious as to what the other sisters were like. Her eyes were dancing already, and so was her small foot, whose quivering motion he could spy under the hem of her dress.

It was in this manner that the evening began, and although in every way it turned out a completely different experience from the one expected, yet of the enjoyment there could be no doubt. Society did not seem moved to its foundations by their appearance, but society in itself was so enjoyable as to leave no margin for disappointment. Adela, who, as the evening advanced, began to be gradually discovered, had what she considered to be quite a choice of partners; and although Philippa and Evelyn were more sparingly supplied, each single dance was such bliss as almost in itself to suffice for the success of the evening. Nor did the scene close in without fresh glimpses of more such delights. Mrs. Wheeler and Mrs. Thursby had both asked them to dinner; another dance was in prospect. Also Mr. Hilbury had offered to lend Philippa a horse in case she wanted to learn to ride—altogether this new acquaintance promised to be most useful and obliging. And Adela seemed to be getting on equally well with the gooseberry-eyed man of the first quadrille, who, as Philippa vaguely observed, remained her most frequent partner. Altogether when in the small hours of the morning she had decided to tear herself and her sisters away from the somewhat depopulated paradise, and when in a back drawing-room Cissy and Miss Amberley had been discovered sound asleep with their heads on each other's shoulders, it was with the feeling that the evening had been anything but a failure that Philippa took leave of her hostess.

CHAPTER VII.

LAUNCHED.

WHEN late in the afternoon four sleepy-eyed but radiant figures assembled in the drawing-room the first glance was towards a certain octagonal table, sacred to the past. That glance discovered the *Lady's Star* among the pile of papers, and was followed by an immediate rush. Despite their experiences of last night the vague expectation of seeing themselves and their dresses described in those familiar columns was not quite extinguished. But page after page fluttered in vain, not so much as a mention of Mrs. Thursby's dance rejoiced their eager eyes. It was very odd, certainly.

'Perhaps there has not been time,' suggested Philippa. 'Of course not! How stupid of us to expect to see it so quickly! This number was printed yesterday; we shall have to wait till next time.'

This appearing reasonable, was regretfully acquiesced in, while they sat down to review the great yesterday, on whose events they had been too sleepy even to exchange remarks that morning.

'I had an awfully good time,' said Philippa, opening the *séance*, so to say. 'That Mr. Hilbury seems tremendously obliging; only that he smiles rather too much and wriggles too; if he wasn't distinctly fat I should expect every moment to see him roll himself into a coil, like that snake we found at Gilham in the garden. But now let's hear about you others. What was the man with the gooseberry eyes like to talk to, Adela?'

'The big, ugly one? Much nicer really than he looked at first sight. He began by asking me whether I did not find it slow—just fancy that!—but after I had told him that I found it just delightful he seemed to wake up somehow, and we got on all right. I think he means to call, for he asked where we lived, and he says he's got the two most beautiful bulldogs in London.'

'Then he can't be quite horrid,' decided Cissy, with a prodigious yawn. 'My man—the one who took me in to supper, I mean—was quite hopeless about dogs; he said they never are any good because if they're affectionate they're ruin to

one's trousers, and if they're not affectionate one might as well have a stuffed beast ; and when I tried him with the Zoo he stared so hard that his eyeglass dropped into his mayonnaise, and he said he had never been there in his life—nobody ever went there nowadays. Altogether I've come to the conclusion that there *can* be born idiots in London as well as out of it.'

'I had some difficulty with my first partner too,' said Evelyn. 'He didn't seem in the least to understand what I meant by gilding coffee-beans for frames ; after I had explained the whole process most carefully he asked whether it wasn't bad for the digestion ; and when I told him that I could white-wash a wall beautifully he looked quite frightened. I suppose he fancied he had been betrayed into dancing with an ex-charwoman.'

'It was not exactly what we expected, but in my opinion it was a success all the same,' pronounced Philippa, with the air of proposing a vote to the assembly. The vote was carried, though not unanimously.

'I mustn't say "No,"' remarked Evelyn reflectively, 'for I've certainly never had such fun in my life ; but, all the same, there was something wrong. We did not make the effect we ought to have made, and I think I know why—we weren't made the most of. There were lots of girls there, not nearly so good-looking as we are, and who were ever so much more noticed, simply because they had beaten out their charms so thin that not an atom went astray. Our frocks haven't got the right fall, nor our hair the right outline. In the intervals of dancing I studied the question. The first thing we've got to do is to change our dressmaker ; we ought to have known that Mrs. Wheeler's dressmaker could have no taste, and the second thing we need is a French maid. Then, also, it was a mistake to dress in different colours ; I had an idea that we would look like a bouquet of flowers, but I forgot that the bouquet would be plucked to pieces and strewn all about the room. Next time we must all be replicas of each other—a ballroom is a stage, after all, and so we must aim at stage effects.'

'Probably you are right,' said Philippa, who in all even indirectly artistic questions invariably submitted to Evelyn's verdict. 'Only a French maid would be very expensive ; perhaps an English one would do.'

'Nonsense, Philippa! You're not going to turn prudent, are you? That's not generally in your line. In for a penny in for a pound, is what I say. There is no sense in going to balls unless we make the most of ourselves.'

'All right,' said Philippa, who indeed had only salved her conscience by the objection, 'I shall inquire about one at once.'

'And there's another thing we must look to, viz., our hands. When I took off my gloves at supper last night I was quite alarmed to see the difference with other people's; that big scratch on my arm that Spangles gave me at parting shows awfully, and all that varnish and sealing-wax and Mayblossom Soap can't have been especially good for the skin either. We must begin to use cold cream, or lemon juice, or whatever it is they doctor up their fingers with.'

While each gazed in some slight consternation at her hands various mental resolutions were formed. Certainly there was not a pair among them calculated to bear the criticism of a French maid.

'The wriggly man—I mean Mr. Hilbury, also said he would call,' remarked Philippa presently.

'Since he wriggles we had better christen him The Serpent at once,' decided Cissy. 'If he and the man with the bulldogs came that would be two male visitors already. Did you catch his name, Adela?'

But in the general hubbub of the ball Adela had quite overheard her partner's name.

'Well, we'll just call him Gooseberry in the meantime,' said Cissy, who generally had the chief hand in conferring titles.

More precise information on this subject was, however, not far off, for only two days after Mrs. Thursby's dance Cissy, coming down the staircase, found herself suddenly face to face with two bandy-legged, grinning monsters, whom in the first instant she almost failed to recognise as dogs, and whom, in her ignorance, she instinctively put down as the ugliest things she had seen in her life, although she afterwards found out that this was a complete mistake.

'I was given leave to bring them,' said a mildly apologetic voice close at hand; and Cissy, looking up, saw Adela's chief partner of the other night following the parlourmaid up the staircase.

'Oh,' she murmured, flushing with the excitement of the

event. 'It's all right, then, of course. Please take them up with you, but only take care that they don't tear Ophelia to pieces—she's in the drawing-room. I'll be back directly; I'm just fetching her some more cream.'

A minute later the waltz which Philippa and Evelyn were practising at the piano was interrupted by the opening of the door and the announcement—

'Lord Maurice Berners.'

Before Miss Amberley had had time to exchange the stocking for the embroidery he was in the room.

With a vague sense of flurry Adela rose from the low seat beside the fire, where she had been poring over a fashion paper.

'Which is Ophelia?' asked Lord Maurice, coming to a standstill in the middle of the carpet, and looking from the small yellow animal which faced him with bristling backbone to the fair-haired girl beside it, and whom perhaps in his mind's eye he still saw crowned with the water-lilies of the other night. 'I was told I should find her here, and I was also told to see that Punch and Judy did not tear her to pieces; so in order to fulfil the command I require to have her pointed out to me.'

There was not much ice left to break after this introduction, and five minutes later the conversation thus promisingly started was in full flow.

Lord Maurice, looked at closer and at leisure, could not be said to gain in personal appearance; at close quarters, as at a distance, he remained a gooseberry-eyed, snub-nose man, with pale, somewhat flabby-looking cheeks and loosely-hung shoulders, but, curiously enough, and despite a superfluous drawl and a general dash of affectation in the manner, the total effect was not entirely displeasing. It was only necessary to catch a certain twinkle in the habitually dull eyes—and that twinkle came almost every time his mouth opened—to feel disarmed. Instinctively you disbelieved in the affectation, just as you disbelieved in the ostentatious limpness of those Herculean shoulders, and the general impression of want of vigour which the almost too easy and loungy manner was apt to give at first sight. People who knew Lord Maurice well knew that although it amused him to appear as soft as a sponge he was in reality as hard as nails. The green-eyed man was, in fact, a rather curious compound of laziness and

energy. 'He spends half the day in bed and the other half in the Tweed,' a friend had written home of him during a Scotch visit. 'He comes to play tennis' (these were the days in which tennis was played) 'with a pipe in his mouth, and doesn't appear to care a hang whether he misses a ball or not; and of course he never misses one, and whistles a tune in between in a way that is peculiarly maddening to his perspiring opponent.'

The Vennings knew nothing as yet of these peculiarities, and saw only that this big, ugly man was astonishingly easy to talk to. Whatever difficulties there had been with the other partners, this one was apparently accessible to all subjects, beginning with the Zoo, to which he declared he would be happy to escort them, and ending with Mayblossom Soap, of which he announced his intention of at once laying in a stock for the purpose of trying the effect on his old neckties. But most accessible of all was he on the subject of dogs. When Cissy discovered that with Punch and Judy Lord Maurice's canine stock was not exhausted, but was still further represented by two prize fox terriers, this new acquaintance rose by another degree in her estimation.

'How could you have the heart to leave them at home to-day?' she said reproachfully.

'I thought two was enough to begin with,' was the apologetic explanation. 'But I can bring them another day if you like,' he added, answering Cissy, but looking at Adela. 'I have also got two monkeys and a cageful of squirrels; I suppose you wouldn't wish me to bring them along too? And there's a tame buffalo in the country which could be sent for if required.'

Heavens preserve us, no! ejaculated Miss Amberley, gazing in alarm at the door, as though prepared to see the last-named quadruped make its entrance on the instant.

'Never mind Aunt Susan. She's got no soul for animals. I certainly must see those monkeys some day. What do you feed them on?'

'Fresh fruit principally.'

'And *how* do you manage to get it fresh here?' inquired Miss Amberley. Even she found it possible to talk to Lord Maurice.

'Aunt Susan doesn't believe in there being anything fresh in London,' explained Philippa. 'Ever since we came here she

has been expecting daily to be poisoned. In fact, she is quite surprised to find herself alive still.'

'It would be kind of you to reassure her a little,' suggested Evelyn. 'You might point out to her that there are a few other people alive in London who yet don't import their food. And perhaps you can give her the address of a place where she can get what she calls "reliable" knitting wool. You must know that Aunt Susan has no confidence in wool of which she does not know the descent. In order to be quite happy she would need to have been acquainted from its earliest lambhood with the sheep from whose coat her knitting wool is made.'

Even to this emergency Lord Maurice rose.

'I shall do my best,' he gravely assured the sisters. 'I do not knit myself, but I have a mother who does, which may lighten my task. Anyway, I'll come back with some sort of an address.' The green eyes twinkled as he said it. Evidently he liked the idea of coming back, either with or without an address. And it was not Miss Amberley's knitting wool alone that came in usefully. When the subject of cycling was brought up he confessed himself a cyclist, and offered himself as what he described 'the most lenient master going.' But here again Miss Amberley had a timid protest to put in. She thought that both riding and cycling were things which girls had far better leave to their brothers.

'But since we haven't any,' Cissy logically argued, 'we've just got to be our own brothers. I certainly mean to have a wheel; Philippa prefers a horse, and Evelyn says the galleries won't leave her time for either.'

'And Miss Ophelia?—I mean Miss Adela?'

But Adela had no special cravings for either a wheel or a horse. She found London quite absorbing enough without any such sensational additions; and as she said it a shade of disappointment might have been observed in the dull, green eyes.

'Didn't I say that all proper men were fond of animals?' burst out Cissy triumphantly before the visitor was well out of the house. 'In all my life I've never before seen such a nice man!'

'He is nice,' agreed Adela; 'if only his face wasn't so awfully like a piecrust before it is baked, and with the gooseberries sticking in it!'



'Oh, nonsense; I don't care what his face is like. I say he's just awfully nice.'

'And he seems to think us nice, too—at least some of us;' and Philippa looked at Adela, while an extraordinary possibility faintly stirred her mind. 'I like him ever so much better than the Serpent; he's got all the other's obligingness without the oiliness. Just imagine his having a title! I wonder what he is exactly?'

Evelyn was already deep in Debrett's, and presently announced to the room that Maurice George Luke Berners, born in 186—('That makes him twenty-six,' she interrupted) was the second son of the Right Honourable the Marquis of Milford and Startingdale, Lord of, &c., &c.

'So he might be a marquis some day if his elder brother died,' observed Philippa reflectively. 'Well, I never imagined those sort of people could be so easy to get on with, and I never heard any one talk nonsense so sensibly as he does. I feel as though he were going to become a friend of the family.'

Although Philippa's presentiment was not at fault, it soon showed itself that Lord Maurice was not the only candidate for the post of family friend. As a visitor, Mr. Hilbury, *alias* the Serpent, closely followed in the steps of the Gooseberry, and was apparently quite as ready to procure addresses or to serve either as escort or as teacher; while at the next dance Philippa found her time more fully taken up than she cared for by this new acquaintance.

At this second dance already the hand of the French maid, who had been secured as fast as money could get her, was visibly seen. Partly by reason of her magic touch, but more so undoubtedly because of the far more magic report of their fortune—the sum of which had naturally not diminished as it spread—the four sisters found themselves in far greater request than the first time. It was dating from this second dance that they got fairly into the current, finding themselves no longer able to count their acquaintances on their fingers, and having to make notes of their engagements. Four heiresses, who are at the same time four *débutantes*, cannot be quite overlooked even in a London set; and even if that set be one of those rather wide, if slightly mixed ones, which recruit their ranks with stragglers both from a higher and a lower circle. Though the four fair-haired sisters were distinctly provincial, they were so in a picturesque, unusual way, which marked them off from

the well-known and all-dreaded 'girl from the provinces'; and although they used queer expressions, and seemed ready for fun in any earthly shape, it was equally impossible to confound them with the disciples of modern 'fastness.' Indeed, despite their unquenchable spirits, it seemed unlikely that they had ever either slapped a man on the back or had a midnight 'passage romp,' or that they would ever learn these accomplishments. Such a curious mixture of propriety and unconventionality had not been seen for long.

But with all this there was nothing like a sensational triumph. The sisters were admired and danced with, but so were many others. Gradually they came to discover that to make a sensation in London something more is required than a legacy of four thousand pounds, even when backed by four pretty faces. But the discovery was scarcely a disappointment; it only proved that London was bigger, and more brilliant and more inexhaustible than they had supposed. Willingly they bowed before its immensity. Besides, as they also found out, it was not at all necessary to make a sensation, in order to have a 'good time,' and—despite certain minor disappointments—such as, for instance, the *Lady's Star's* obstinate silence on their subject—and a few passing shocks at the realities of social life seen near—the three elders were having that undeniably. Cissy loudly declared that she was having it too, although her delight in balls was fed as yet chiefly by the pride of the position, and also by cakes. For her chocolate creams still played a greater rôle than partners, and—well, certainly it *was* rather hard at times to keep awake. She was beginning almost to understand her aunt's views on this subject.

That the money was spinning freely meanwhile it is almost unnecessary to say. With increased acquaintance, how was it possible that expenditure should not keep pace? The French maid was not the only change in domestic arrangements; very soon she was followed by a blazing Buttons, it being found that with so many visitors the parlourmaid did not suffice. Then, in view of constant invitations, mere hospitality seemed to demand that some return be made. The beginning was to ask a few friends somewhat timidly to luncheon; then, seeing that nobody was surprised, they ventured on a dinner, and, having once tasted of the sensation, it seemed impossible to stop. The fever of hospitality is a

distinct society disease, seen in its most virulent form in London, and the Vennings had been caught by it, as many others are caught. The discovery that they could actually do as other people do was mounting rapidly to their heads. Even Miss Amberley, despite her mental agonies, could not forbear a faint thrill of satisfaction as she took her place at the head of the luxuriously decked board. Under these circumstances it was only natural that the cook should ask for help, and so both a kitchen-maid and a scullery-maid were added to the household. Then, of course, there was the question of a conveyance. Mrs. Wheeler suggested their keeping a carriage, but they finally decided to be 'economical' and only hire a brougham for the season. Also there were Evelyn's painting lessons, and the riding lessons which Philippa began to take at a fashionable riding-master's, and the horse which she decided to buy, partly in order not to have to borrow one from Mr. Hilbury, and partly because it had been offered her by a friend of Mrs. Thursby's. Of course she could not know that the friend was in urgent need of a hundred and fifty pounds, and that the chestnut had therefore been praised considerably above its deserts. She saw only that it had a silky mane and intelligent brown eyes, and, having always felt that she could love horses even better than dogs, and salving her conscience by the reflection that what could be bought could always be sold again, she succumbed to the chestnut's charms.

It must not be supposed that Philippa was entirely without thought for the future. Four thousand pounds appeared to her, indeed, to be so inexhaustible a sum as almost to preclude the necessity of calculation; nevertheless her real, if somewhat spasmodic sense of duty had made her at first attempt to keep count of their daily increasing expenses. But soon, very soon, she began to lose the ground under her feet. The current had full hold of her now; at the rate at which she was being swept along it was impossible to stop and calculate, even if calculation had at all lain in her nature. Since she had not been able to manage it in the stagnation of Gilham, how was she to manage it in the whirl of London? Her brain was too dizzy for that, her appetite for enjoyment too keen. And nobody seemed in the least astonished at their manner of living; the applause with which each new step was met served necessarily to lull alarm and to make the sisters

vaguely feel that of course it must be 'all right' so. It is true that Philippa had already arrived at telling herself that very likely the four seasons would have to be cut down to three, but even that seemed an eternity, almost certain to bring about some fortunate solution.

So far indeed no breath of sentiment seemed to have touched any of these young hearts—nothing that foreshadowed a coming romance. They were, in fact, too busy enjoying themselves to have had time for softer feelings. Their two most constant visitors still went by the name of 'Gooseberry' and 'The Serpent'—modified for familiar use into 'Serpy'—which made it clear that although public opinion had long ago marked down both Lord Maurice and Mr. Hilbury as suitors, the one to Adela, the other to Philippa, they had not yet succeeded in arousing any tender feelings. But it was something that two of the sisters should be provided with admirers; and as for Evelyn—but that which had happened to Evelyn must be told in another chapter.

*(To be continued.)*

## ‘THE PRAISE OF FOLLY.’

---

TO what accidents do we owe some of the world's famous books ! If it had not been for a tedious journey across the Alps on horseback, and if Erasmus had not been a friend of Sir Thomas More's, in all probability ‘The Praise of Folly’ would never have been written. For it was upon his journey home from Rome, Erasmus tells us in his preface, that thoughts of More suggested to his mind thoughts about ‘*Moria*,’ which is the Greek for Folly—which thoughts when he reached More's hospitable roof he hastened to write down.

That journey home was just one of the rare breathing-spaces which come in the busy lifetime of a scholar. At home Erasmus had work to do that was absorbing enough : the studies that have laid the basis of our Biblical and textual criticism, the letters on theological and political matters to Princes and Bishops and Cardinals, the conversations on points of scholarship with fellow-students—yes, and besides those, the controversies on paper with opponents, which required wariness of expression, if they were allowed to lack delicacy and politeness of language. All these had to be laid on one side when one went travelling in those days, and so there was an opportunity given for something quite original and new to grow up in the mind of the great student of books and men.

We catch the mind of Erasmus unfolding its rich stores of information at an opportune moment indeed. The desire of his life has been consummated : he has seen Rome. He has had every opportunity of studying the centre of the world's culture, and nominally of the world's religion, and it is but a few years before the challenge of the monk of Wittenburg. Observant, sensitive to all impressions, gifted with extraordinary insight into human character, he is returning from the Eternal City as disenchanted as Luther himself, and on the way he links together into a continuous chain the still glowing memories of the men and things he has seen. We forgive his

cynicism at such a moment, as he asks, 'Who can tell the tale? Surely none other than the Spirit of Folly herself.' And we recognise at once the genius that deputed it to such an imaginary being to show the poor world its face in the pitiless glass of truth: like the Court-jester Folly will surely be allowed with impunity to utter the baldest realities; who would lift his hand and bring yet more derision upon himself by joining in a contest with the cap and bells? However quaint the paradox, however glaring the inconsistency, Folly may point at it unhindered, in whatever arcana of social or ecclesiastical life it make its home.

And so it is with shameless freedom she trips on to the stage, and at once begins the wonderful monologue that men have not yet left off applauding.

She was born, she says, in the fortunate islands, where the harvests grow without ploughing and sowing, and where flourish the moly, the nepenthe, the amaranth, and the lotus; she is queen over all by right because she enters as guiding spirit into all that makes life pleasant; she contends that the charm of young children lies in the abandonment of their folly, while the wisdom that comes with age comes but to steal away bloom by bloom the unconscious graces of childhood, and in the end she is sure to be reinstated, when old age sinks back once more into the innocent foolishness from which it originally sprang.

Yes—she leads the dotard, she says, to a spring of oblivion all her own, that he may drain a long draught, dismiss all care, and welcome back the boyhood that reblossoms in his soul. He need no more feel life to be tedious, but will be content to join the children in their games; they will gladly welcome one who is just like themselves, *'except that he has more wrinkles, and has had more birthdays.'*

Folly then makes an excursion to the Pantheon of Greece, in order to detail the extent of her empire among the gods of the ancient world, and comes back to show that she is the guiding genius of love and friendship. Without her, she says, the speaker will grow cold, the musician cease to please, the actor be hissed from the stage, the poet and painter sink to mediocrity, and the physician starve.

Wisdom, again, some might think, is a necessary quality in a ruler. Not at all, Folly says; wise rulers and philosopher-kings have always ruined their states in the end. If she were

asked to name Rome's most pestilent citizens, she would point to Cato, Cicero, and The Gracchi ; never to her knowledge has a state been moulded politically upon the abstractions of Plato and Aristotle. It is an utter mistake to believe in the necessity of wisdom at all, for if it were universal from her point of view things would be inextricably confused.

Having taken for her premise that pleasure is the only good, she argues easily enough that the life of her votary is better than the lives of those who aim at other things. If seeking after knowledge only brings gloomy poverty, premature old age, grey hairs, and worn-out sight, would it not be better to be content with Folly. And this is a gibe that comes straight from the heart of Erasmus, whose championship of learning had been no easy struggle. Is there much difference, again she asks, between the self-deceiving joys that the madhouse walls could tell of and the irrational traditions of sport, which require that a wild beast must be slaughtered by one of noble birth, while a churl is allowed to kill a bullock.

So, that none may escape, builders, alchemists, gamblers come in for their share of quiet satire—and then Folly passes to more serious topics still. She passes at a step into the sphere of corrupted religion. Her attack upon Indulgences and semi-pagan customs comes with tenfold force from what goes before. She has scant mercy for those who think that their stay in Purgatory can be regulated by earthly clocks, or suppose that a Lerna of vices can be wiped out by the payment of a fee to a priest. The worship of local saints, accredited with mysterious powers over special human ills, rouses her sarcasm ; one can save from toothache, one from shipwreck, one from robbery. Well does Erasmus exclaim by her lips, 'Why do I essay this ocean of superstition ? Virgil's hundred tongues and voice of iron would not suffice to tell of the delirium of superstition to which the lives of Christians are a prey ! The worship of the saints has grown to such a height that the worship of Christ is stifled, and mortal sin can be easily atoned for, if you care to desert your wife and children and go on a journey to Rome, Jerusalem, or Compostella !'

Then she rests a moment from her strenuous tirade, and prepares for a still more pointed attack. If such things as these be accounted merely the follies of the populace, there is folly enough to be found in the wise as in all. What of the

Grammarians, who if they were not so foolish must surely go mad in the distracting atmosphere of the schools? What of their absurd quarrels over mere verbalisms, their pitiable exultation over opponents? What of the poets, again, and writers of rhetoric, poor victims of a passion for fine expression. Is it not folly that they are content to pay with ill-health, weak sight, premature old age, and an early grave for the applause of a little clique of half-blind fanatics like themselves? See the lawyers pass over the stage, with their six hundred laws, their glasses and opinions! The sophists follow with their syllogisms; then come the bearded philosophers, who talk as if they were as well informed about the working of natural laws as if they had but just left the Council of the Gods! Nature surely laughs at them in her sleeve all the time, those men who know so much about ideas and forms and 'quiddities,' and yet are so incapable of seeing the ditch or the stone in their path.

This is but an introduction to the attack upon the whole system of mediæval theology, drawn out as it was by scholastic nicety to absurdly scientific exactness. If the follies of the wise merit attention, what of the follies of that which calls itself the highest wisdom—theology? 'Shall I essay to drain this marsh, that exhales pestilence; shall I be bold enough to touch this weed, that smells so foully when it is handled?' Yet surely this is Folly's very stronghold, and she has a perfect right there. The nice distinctions, the blasphemous suggestions, the dogmatic propositions hazarded so boldly in spheres, where there is no room at all for dogma—all these must have been dictated by Folly herself. These subtleties, involved and complicated by the labyrinthine controversies of Thomists, Scotists, Albertists, and Occamists—why, the apostles themselves could not follow them, unless they were aided by a special gift. How different, Erasmus says, almost dropping the mask of Folly from his face—how different are St. Paul's definitions of faith and of charity; how much truer and nobler is his view of the Eucharist, though it be less definite; how little of the scholastic curiosity that pries into mysteries is there in what the apostles tell us of the Lord's Mother, whom they knew so well! The Apostle of the Gentiles would surely be the first to condemn the wearisome and hair-splitting developments in the interpretation of Church doctrines.

But such considerations, alas! are meaningless to the



schoolmen, for they seldom read the Gospels or the Epistles, and what they read they are content with in the Latin Vulgate. In their ignorance they think it impious to apply the rules of grammar to Holy Scripture. And this is an easy creed for rascals who know no grammar !

Having had her fling at theological subtleties, Folly comes to close quarters with smaller game. Erasmus has never forgotten the miserable days which he passed in the monastery of Deventer as a young man, and he never loses an opportunity of attacking monasticism. The monks are too pious, he says, to learn to read, too foolish not to understand that the Almighty loves something better than psalms learned by rote. From them he passes to the mendicant orders, once so noble and useful, now so hopelessly degenerate. Folly finds in these her true subjects. They profess to represent the simplicity of apostolic times, but they are really bound hand and foot by a rigid formalism ; they have to wear strangely coloured and uncouth garments, and cannot sleep or rise when they please. 'Christian brothers' they call themselves, but they really breathe such a spirit of mutual rancour, that they are more intent on differing from one another than on imitating their Master ! They do not take into account, when they insist on ceremonies and petty human traditions, that Christ requires but one thing—Charity. Let them glory in their fasts and ceremonies, which are numerous enough to sink seven merchant ships, and their hoods, which are generally so dirty, that a sailor would disdain to wear them, and the lazy existence they lead like sponges in the sea ! For all their hoarseness from long chanting, for all their vows of silence, Christ will turn and reject them as but a new race of Jews. He will ask alone how they kept the law of Charity.

From matters ecclesiastical Folly passes for a moment to the Court. There she finds utter selfishness and lack of public spirit, and boldly denounces kings and princes. What is the ruler's ideal of duty in the sixteenth century ? Well—he has fulfilled it if he hunts assiduously, if he breeds great-boned horses, if he disposes of high offices to his own advantage, and does not scruple to increase his own wealth at his subjects' expense.

And the typical courtier is no better : he lies a-bed till mid-day, hears Mass as he lies, gets up, breakfasts and dines, and

then goes through a round of games and amusements, to be followed at night by a supper and drinking-bout.

As for the Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops, says Folly with a backward glance over the Alps, they are only remarkable for the extremes to which they carry the luxury so common among the laity : they care no longer for the sheep ; their only pastoral duty is the feeding of themselves. The Pope himself, the Vicar of Christ, is the Prince of a corrupt Court full of abominations ; he has no time for Christian work, but leaves it to St. Peter and St. Paul, who have leisure for it ; he lords it over a patrimony of royal extent, with estates, revenues, and taxes, and yet he claims to sit in the seat of those who said, 'We have left all, and followed Thee.' He keeps an army to war against the enemies of the Church, but surely a Pope like Alexander VI., the Borgia of infamy, or Julius II., whom Erasmus had himself just seen besieging Bologna, is the worst enemy the Church can have !

And the Prince-Bishops of Germany—are they not equally scandalous ? Politics compels them practically to abandon their spiritual duties, for they have vast satrapies to rule. So they pass on their duties to the bishops, who in their turn pass them on to pastors, who hand them to vicars. Then the mendicant orders do the work of the vicars, even employing their own underlings to shear the sheep. It is scandalous indeed all this ; but does it not prove the contention with which Folly started, that all things, whether ecclesiastical or political, are in such an irrational state that she herself, and none other, must be their guiding principle.

Such in a brief and imperfect abstract is the attack upon things as they were in the society of his own day, which Erasmus put in the year 1508 into the mouth of Folly. A mixture of practical insight, true religious feeling, and pointed sarcasm, it kindled more effectually the elements of revolt than any closely reasoned treatise, and, strange to say, was for a time allowed to journey unhindered, even to the Vatican itself.

But that her declamation may not appear wholly destructive Folly ends her speech in a tenderer, a more earnest, a less bitter way. She turns from the corruptions that she has been scourging to a better theme. These are but the rottenness of the rind—what of the core ? The hopeful and trustful mind of the great Humanist is still serene in the face of the contra-

dictions of the world. There is more in Christianity than in any of its manifestations. There is an inner kernel of truth and blessedness in it, which will last on when the false and corrupt is torn away. This inner kernel is, however, the very thing that the world considers folly. So surely the audience that has been patient so far will allow her to end by showing that even here, in the inner spirit of the Christian religion, in its simplicity and purity, she has, so far as the world's eyes are concerned, a divinely given station.

It is a striking and beautiful ending to Folly's sermon. If those who are moved by the spirit of Christ are to the world fools, that is only what Scripture foretold. To the world a consistent following of gospel precept must ever seem to have a spice of madness in it: to forgive all injuries, to allow oneself to be deceived, to shun pleasure, to court labour and contempt, to despise the lower allurements of life, and to desire but one thing—death. This surely is the foolishness of man, but the wisdom of God. Such an abstraction from the sphere of the world to the sphere of the spirit is the very essence of piety, and is summarised in the Christian paradox 'having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' There is a true world of light, which can only be reached in such a way, and those who do not strive after it are like the men of whom Plato told who sat in their cave and saw but the shadows of reality. To be 'foolish' in the eyes of the world is to open the doors that lead into the spiritual world. In such grand tones does Folly end her sermon.

This, then, was the fruit of Erasmus' tedious ride across the Alps, and of the quiet hours he spent at Sir Thomas More's. They are old themes that he touches with so light a hand, for he had long ago in his '*Enchiridion*' expressed his view of the simplicity of true religion. But here, with a special vividness amid tirades against mistaken formalism, the crass ignorance of the monks, and the obscurities of theology, stands out the simple beauty of the one thing needful—Charity. If the contrast is more striking, the horizon is wider than in any previous book. Erasmus is more than ever convinced by experience, by reading, by study, and by the development of his intellectual powers, that he was originally right. His mind has long been made up on the monastic question, and on the theology of the schoolmen; he had now unflinchingly delivered himself, and every cranny in Europe would soon

know his opinions on the anomalies of the Chair of Peter, and the Papal Court, from which it was well known that he had just returned.

If the book does not redeem its author from charges of tergiversation in difficult circumstances, at least, when we study his openness of expression, we cannot allow him to be charged with moral cowardice. His position was, indeed, taken up most definitely long before Luther spoke at all ; and it is well to remember this, in order to give two great men their due.

The charm of reality is on the whole book ; it bears the stamp of its writer's recent experiences at the Papal Court. Studying as he was the New Testament at this time, the contrasts of its precepts with actual facts was to him more glaring than ever. The Pope's triumph after his successful war, the cultured infidelity that he found among the higher clergy, the ignorance of the lower, the pomp and display of ecclesiastical government, and the ceremonial carried out to such small details, seemed to him most glaringly absurd. Disillusioned long ago as to the reality of much professing sanctity, and full of recollections of pageant and show at Venice or Bologna or Rome, with many an evil story or cynical remark that he had lately heard, ringing in his ear, he moulded all—memories, deductions, and inferences—into the monologue of Folly ; and the result is not only a book that bears on religion, but a masterly picture of the times.

Again, the book is a perfect picture of the mind of the writer, so earnest when earnestness is essential, and yet so ready to see the humorous side-lights on the great problems of life. Here was a style of composition in which both sides of Erasmus could have full freedom. His path is all the way through the very borderland of intense gravity and merciless wit. This was the very country he had made peculiarly his own.

How was this dangerous *jeu d'esprit* answered by those whom it attacked ? For some time no attempt was made, until at last the University of Louvain sent Martin Dorpius into the field to win his spurs in showing Erasmus how dangerous it was to make foes of theologians. Erasmus answered him by enumerating the names of the learned men who had welcomed his book—even to the future Pope Leo himself. Martin subsequently became one of the most energetic adherents of Erasmus.

## LEGENDS AND SUPERSTITIONS CONNECTED WITH THE HOLLY.

---

MANY are the legends and superstitions connected with the holly.

Old authors write of the tree as the hulwer and the holm, while in our old ballads it is nearly always the hollin-tree.

It is as the holm that Spenser includes it among the trees that grew in the forest where Una and her gentle knight sought 'covert'—

'The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors,  
And poet's sage ; the fir that weepeth still ;  
The yew obedient to the bender's will ;  
The birch for shafts ; the sallow for the mill ;  
The myrrh sweet-bleeding in the bitter-wound ;  
The warlike beech, the ash for nothing ill ;  
The fruitful olive and the platane round ;  
The *carver Holm* ; the maple seldom inward sound.'

The 'carver holm' is readily understood ; from its evenness of grain the wood has always been in repute for carving and turning purposes.

Coles, in his quaint Herbal, tells us that the smaller branches of the holly may be used in decorating houses and churches, and that those of a larger size are 'very necessary for carters to make whips and for riding-rods,' and 'which may seem a little strange' (to the reader who knows no better), 'one of his friends had a holly-tree growing in his orchard of that bignesse that, being cut downe, he caused it to be sawed out in Boards, and made himself therewith a *Coffin*, and' (if Mr. Coles mistakes not) 'left enough to make his wife one also. 'Both the parties,' he adds, 'were very corpulent, therefore the reader may imagine the bignesse of the tree.'

From holm, it is quite possible, from its use for Christian purposes, the tree became holy, transformed again into holly.

In the Harleian Collection, in the British Museum, there is a song, or carol, in which it is spoken of as the holy—

‘Nay, my nay, hyt shal not be I wys,  
 Let holy hafe the maistery as the maner ys.  
 Holy & hys mery men, they dawnsyn and they syng,  
 Ivy and her maydens, they wepyn and they wryng.’

In some parts of Yorkshire, curiously enough to this day, it is believed that if more ivy than holly is used in the Christmas decorations the wife will ‘wear the breeches’ for the ensuing year. An old farmer was once seen pulling down the ivy with which the kitchen was decorated. ‘I’ll ha’ noan o’ this,’ he whispered to his squire.

In Yorkshire, too, they have the beautiful superstition that Christmas is the one feast of the year in which the fairies may rejoice; they may hear the Holy Name without having to flee and hide, and *they have been heard to join in the carols.*

Once a little elf-child, we are told, was forgotten by some mischance, and was heard weeping and wailing up and down the house, though none saw him till Whitsuntide.

Speaking of this to an old woman in Devonshire, she assured us that the fairies had left the child ‘of purpose.’ If any one had had wit to sprinkle (christen) him, he never would have gone back to his people, but become a Christian child!

The holly used for decorations, both in church and house, should be taken down on Candlemas Eve, or misfortune will come on parish and people.

Herrick alludes to this belief—

‘Down with the holly and ivy, all  
 Wherewith ye deck the Christmas hall;  
 So that the superstitious find  
 Not one least branch there left behind;  
 For look, how many leaves there be,  
 So many goblins ye shall see!’

In taking down holly, in some parts of England it is thought unlucky to prick the finger, if blood comes, but if a leaf stick to dress or coat it is a good omen.

Herrick too gives a pretty sequence of trees and shrubs to be used for the different festivals :—

‘Down with the rosemary and bays,  
Down with the mistletoe,  
Instead of holly now upraise  
The greener box for show.

The holly hitherto did sway,  
Let box now domineer,  
Until the dancing Easter-day,  
Or Easter’s eve appear.

Then youthful box, which now hath grace  
Your houses to renew,  
Grown old, surrender must his place  
Unto the crisped yew.

When yew is out, then birch comes in,  
And many flowers beside,  
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin,  
To honour Whitsuntide.

Green rushes then and sweetest bents,  
With cooler oaken boughs,  
Come in for comely ornaments  
To re-adorn the house.

Thus times do shift ; each thing his turn does hold  
New things succeed as former times grow old.’

In old days a branch of holly, picked on Christmas Eve, was as efficacious as the rowan, or mountain-ash, in protecting from witches and warlocks or evil spells.

A twig, brought from church, might be kept—like the Easter-palm—for the same purpose.

Your cattle, too, will thrive, and your sheep and goats bring forth twins, if you fasten up a bit of holly in stall or manger or fold, that God’s creatures may rejoice with man on the anniversary of His birth.

In Cornwall there is the beautiful superstition that ‘God’s bird,’ the robin, sits and sings all Christmas Day in the holly-tree. He will not touch the berries.

In some parts of the north of England, and, we believe, in the whole of the south of Scotland, it is believed that if the birds begin to eat the holly berries before Christmas it will be a short winter ; if left untouched till after the feast, it will be a long and hard one.

Unfortunately the tree is used for more superstitious purposes. In the North of England three leaves, to which names are given, are put under the pillow, in the name of the Trinity (to make the spell more efficacious the *left* hand must be used), and the leaf that has turned by morning represents the future husband or wife.

The leaves, too, are sometimes floated in a tub or basin of water, a tiny piece of candle having been placed on each and lighted. According as they sink or swim will be the success of the undertaking—marriage or other—in which the person floating them is interested.

If you dream on a leaf of holly stolen from church the dream will come true.

If you walk about on Christmas Eve with a holly-leaf in your shoe (!) your lover will come next day ; but if the reader wishes for any more of these 'idle rites,' he must turn to Folkard's interesting work, from which we have gleaned some of these related.

To go back to the tree itself, the old legend runs that at the time of the Crucifixion the holly was a monarch of the woods, and so proud of its height and strength that, when Herod's soldiers came to look for wood to fashion the cross, it offered itself, and as a punishment its leaves bear thorns, so that nothing innocent will touch it, while its berries, once yellow, are now like drops of blood.

Yet another legend says that the soldiers wove our Lord's crown of the prickly leaves, and hence its berries have ever since been blood-red.

In Gerard's time the holly with yellow berries is noted as growing 'in Wiltshire, by Warder (Wardour) Castle, which belongeth to my Lord Arundel.'

Another, and this time a German legend, tells that the holly, giving itself willingly at first to form the crown, was so filled with contrition when it found itself circling the brow of our Lord, that its berries, in shame, became as drops of blood.

Though nowadays witches are supposed to fly before a branch of holly, and from its use at the holy season of Christmas it has become to us what may be called a sacred tree, there is no doubt that, employed in pagan days in various heathen rites, it was, for long after Christianity was introduced, used in witchcraft, and its connections with evil spells and sorcery may be traced in many of our old ballads.



In the 'Marriage of Sir Gawine,' the 'lady,' who had been so unhappily bewitched by her step-mother—

'Sate  
Between an oake and a green hollin.'

In the ballad of 'The Bonnie Bird,' when it warns Sir Hugh his mistress is unfaithful, the knight asks it, surprised at its speech—

'Oh, where was ye gotten, where was ye cleeked ?  
My bonnie bird, tell me.'

And the bird is ready with his answer—

'Oh, I was cleeked in the good greenwood,  
In the midst o' a *hollen-tree*.'

And in the pitiful ballad of "The Twa Bairns," too, the unhappy mother is introduced as walking

'Aneath the hollin-tree.'

In the curious Cymric song, 'The Gorwynion,' as translated in 'Lyra Celtica,' there is a striking description of the holly. 'Brightly,' the bard sings—

'Brightly glitters the top of the hard holly that opens its golden leaves  
When all are asleep on the surrounding walls.  
God slumbers not, when He means to give deliverance.'

As a simple the holly does not seem to have been of much repute.

The berries, Gerard tells us, were considered 'good against the colicke ; ten or twelve being taken inwardly, as we have learned of them who oftentimes make triall thereof' ; and a decoction of the bark, applied as a fomentation, was 'good to consolidate broken bones.'

The powder of the leaves, dried in the oven and drank in ale, was good for stitches and pricking pains in the side, 'which the prickles growing on the leaves do signify.'

Holly, too, when 'beaten to powder and drunke, is an experimental medicine against dysenterie and such like.'

Our ancestors made a birdlime of the bark, putting it into a ditch or boggy bit of ground till rotten, when they took it out and beat it till it became 'of the thickness and clamminess of lime,' after which a little oil was added and it was considered fit for use.

## *THE LADY OF THE MIST.*

---

IT was a foggy night, and the London streets were merged in the obscurity of autumn dusk; the hint of cold in the air made the passers-by quicken their movements; and the servant girl, hurrying in pursuit of the joys of her Sunday out, looked red about the nose, and chilly in her muslin blouse and pink ribbons.

Captain Dearle had never before penetrated into the dingy districts which lie to the north and west of Notting Hill—districts in which the boarding-house flourishes like a London plane-tree, and where folks clinging hard to the fringes of gentility struggle and starve and despair.

He gazed at the names of the streets as he passed, and congratulated himself that he had put on a great-coat, and also in the completeness of his own qualifications for the post of a really good friend. 'Don't half like the job,' he whispered to himself under his breath.

He was nearing a lamp-post as he said so, and, as he advanced into its stream of light, a girl who was coming briskly towards him from the opposite direction also came within the sphere of radiance, and he saw her face.

It is not given to all to look upon one face in a crowd, and know that for them it carries a message; but there are some who will understand the telegraphic suddenness with which that face etched itself into Dearle's consciousness—a face through which the rays of the soul seemed to stream like the light of a lamp through a delicate tinted shade; more expressive than any other he had ever looked upon. The line of the lips, proud and tender, the steadfastness of the brow, the dark glory of the eye, the proud uplifting of the head, as though the owner of it had carved her own way to the honour and dignity which seemed to enfold her like an atmosphere.

She looked at him full in the face as she went by, with the attention that one unconsciously gives to a human being who

looms suddenly on our view out of the mysteries of fogland. Then she passed on.

The young man stopped short in the road ; a moment later, with no definite idea in his mind, he followed her as though she had called him.

She moved on, straight and fleetly, the mist softening and idealising the graceful lines of her slender youth. He did not pause to think what he was doing, but went on after her, up one street and down another, till she reached the wide-flung door of a big church, and went in. Dearle's hat was off, and he had followed her up the aisle before he so much as reflected where he was.

She went up the church as one who makes for an accustomed spot, and seated herself not far from the altar of the side chapel, in a little corner outside the choir screen. There was a lingering fragrance of the morning's incense in the lazy air ; the organ was being softly played, an acolyte was lighting the tall wax lights above the altar, and the church was thronged with people.

They were mostly women and mostly shabby ; the stress and strain of the daily struggle for existence was upon all their faces, but here, apparently, they found something which for the time smoothed the furrows and brought oblivion from the frets. Dearle sat down quietly in a corner, and watched his lady of the mist. She never once looked round ; but he knew her soul was soaring to the light, when the sweet, reed-like notes of a boy's voice rose through the hushed building, and the voices of the choir chimed in upon the melodious strains just when they seemed too heart-breaking. The sermon surprised him. It was full of power and point, a sermon to make the idlest think awhile.

The girl was long on her knees when it was over, but at last she got up, and as she turned her face to the door he saw it again fully, and marvelled at its vivid quality of expression. It was that of one who, in the midst of a dull reality, holds the key to a happiness which can neither be explained nor denied. Her eye fell on him ; he thought she recognised him, but she passed out again into the fog, and he followed helplessly.

How could he let her go ? But what else was possible, seeing that he was a gentleman ? At least he would find out where she lived ; meanwhile, he had so delayed in the church that the errand on which he was bound must wait until

to-morrow, which would give him a chance to come into the neighbourhood again.

But fortune, which ever favours the brave, gave him the one chance in ten thousand. Round a street corner, noiseless, and rapid, with no sound of bell, came a cyclist. The girl, seeing nothing in the fog, stepped off the pavement into the road as the thing swept past. The handle-bar caught her shoulder with force, knocking her down, and the machine swerved violently aside : its rider recovered himself with an effort, cried out, 'Clumsy fool !' and vanished into the obscurity of the road beyond.

Captain Dearle made a spring, but too late to insert his stick into the rider's spokes, as he had hoped to do ; he bent over the girl in apprehension, for she lay very still ; but in a moment she moved and sat up, and then slowly, and accepting the help of his hand, stood up.

'Oh, thank you,' she faltered, in rather a dazed voice, 'I—what happened ?'

He made her lean against the adjacent lamp-post, so that its light revealed her to him fully, and questioned her anxiously as to whether she was hurt. She thought not, but owned to feeling somewhat giddy. 'I think I must have struck my head,' she faltered ; then she put up her hand to her hair, on the left side, and drew it away with blood on it.

'I will make my way home as fast as I can,' she said ; and now he was sufficiently relieved of his anxiety to be able to feel glad because her accent was so pure, her manner of speech so refined.

'I shall do myself the honour to see you as far as your door,' he said. 'You might turn faint and fall down ; I can't leave you to yourself.'

'You are very kind,' she answered, with the air of some one conferring a favour, much too well bred to make a fuss or decline a well-meant offer. 'It is not at all far—only just round here in Shrewsbury Mansions.'

'In Shrewsbury Mansions !' he echoed. 'That is strange ; I was on my way to call upon a young lady in Shrewsbury Mansions. What number do you live at ?'

'I think I know the names of all the people in the mansions,' said the girl. 'Who is it that you want to find ?'

'A Miss Margery Wilmot.'

'Oh !' she laughed a little. She had accepted his arm, and they were moving on together. 'That is curious,' she said.

‘What, you know her?’

‘Yes, I know her rather well; in fact, she shares a sitting-room with me. Are you a friend of hers?’

‘Well, now,’ he said confidentially. ‘You said just now that I was very kind, or some nonsense of that sort, to come to your help just now, when that brute knocked you down. If you really think yourself obliged to me, I wish you would pay off the obligation by telling me a little what kind of girl Miss Wilmot is.’

She paused a little. ‘I think I must first be satisfied who you are, and why you want to know.’

‘Certainly; you are a loyal friend, I see. Well, the truth is, I am a friend of a friend of hers—Captain Dearle, of the Green Lancers, who came home from India last Friday.’

‘I do not think Miss Wilmot knows that the Green Lancers are in England,’ said the lady of the mist; she waited a little before speaking, but her sweet voice was quite serene.

‘No; she thought they were not coming till next week; well now, do be kind, and tell me what sort of a girl she is, for upon that depends whether I shall feel inclined to do the task I’ve had set me.’

‘She is a very ordinary kind of girl; there is nothing remarkable about her.’

‘H’m! Now do you think, judging from what you know of her, do you think she is the kind of girl to bring an action for breach of promise!’

‘An action for breach of promise!’ echoed the girl.

‘Yes; you may have heard that she is engaged?’

‘I know she is, to Captain Manners-Langton.’

‘That’s right; a nice fellow, good family too; you see, his family do not—in short, never have—liked it. And he thinks it will be better to be out of it. I should not put it like this to her, of course, not so crudely; in fact, I have a letter from him to give to her. But it comes to that, put shortly. It was a thing hastily entered into, three years ago, and he has never seen her since, you know, and he thinks if all his people are against it he had better get off with it while he can. But now, do you think—positively, I don’t like, you being the sort of girl you are, to suggest it to you; but you see he knows she is badly off, and he feels such a hound to be jilting her—it would salve his conscience a little if you thought that she—could be induced to—take anything.’

There was a silence ; it seemed to Captain Dearle electrically charged with contempt ; but he thought this was the result of a guilty conscience.

‘Do you mean anything in the nature of pecuniary compensation ?’ she asked at last, in her clear, fine tones.

He murmured a nervous assent.

‘I can imagine that Captain Manners-Langton was anxious to break off relations with a woman whom he thought capable of such things as you suggest,’ frigidly said the lady of the mist ; ‘but from what I know of her, I think he does her injustice ; I have always believed her to be a lady.’

Captain Dearle sighed. ‘You think I had better not suggest it ?’ he asked.

‘I think you will hurt her feelings very much if you do. Why need you interview her at all ? Is it not putting both of you to unnecessary pain ? If you have a letter from her *fiancé* surely the best way would be to put it in the post. Do you want to gloat over her first moments of mortification ?’

‘Rather not,’ he said heartily, ‘but Charlie was anxious to know how she took it.’

She came to a standstill before an open door, which revealed a staircase covered in dingy oilcloth, and lit by a hesitating gas jet.

‘She is out of town to-night,’ she said, ‘so you could not see her now ; you must come to-morrow ; I still advise your posting the letter.’

‘A shorter way would be to give it to you,’ he said. ‘Will you see that she gets it, and tell her that I will call about three to-morrow ?’

‘Certainly, if you wish it ;’ and she took the envelope from his hand. She stood upon the dilapidated steps, ennobling them with her very presence ; but he thought the accident must have shaken her more than the active nature of her walking homewards had led him to suppose ; for, in the light of the gas, he could see her face ; and all the joy, the wondrous glow, had faded out of it, like sunset out of a sky, leaving only the misty beauty of wan twilight.

‘Good-night,’ she said, ‘and thank you for your kindness.’

She turned away, and walked slowly up the stairs like one in pain. She did not look back. He watched her as far up as he could see, and then turned on his heel with a quick sigh.

Upstairs, by the light of a hastily lit candle, Margery Wilmot slowly unfolded the letter, in the handwriting she knew so well. How those letters had poured in upon her, like leaves in Vallombrosa, three years ago when her engagement was new. They had been much rarer of late, but that she thought was inevitable—one grows so apart during long absences, that letter-writing becomes difficult; and then there was the glorious prospect of seeing again, face to face, the man who had wooed her so ardently, so impetuously, in the woods of a certain Highland hotel, where she was staying with a good old maiden cousin. How the thought of his love had gilded all the sordid details of life in Shrewsbury Mansions! And now!

‘He never loved me; he was not what I thought him,’ she whispered. Then she opened the letter, and as she read, the scarlet blushes flamed up over her white face, and the lightning flashed from her eyes. ‘Cruel! hateful!’ she whispered. ‘If anything would help one not to care, it would be this letter. And to this man I have dedicated three years of my life and my love! How thankful I ought to be to be disillusioned.’

And then a drop of blood from her hair, falling heavily upon the thick club note-paper in her hand, recalled her to a sense of throbbing in her head; and as she dizzily turned away to get some water, the merciful oblivion came, and she sank upon the sofa, in momentary forgetfulness of her wounded head and lacerated heart.

Hugh Dearle knew, as on the following day he ascended the steep public staircase in Shrewsbury Mansions that led to No. 14B, that nothing but the hope of again meeting the girl who had so charmed him last night would have induced him to set foot in the place. He hated his errand from the first, but now his hatred had taken more concrete form, and he felt himself an unexampled ruffian. But Manners-Langton and he had been friends for so long—in fact, the ex-lover of Margery Wilmot was a very good fellow in all those qualities which make up a man’s claims to a man’s regard—easy-going, good-tempered, honest—a certain lack of refinement did not show up under canvas or on the march. What he wanted now was a written assurance that Margery had entirely relinquished any claim upon him. He did not wish ‘the other one’ to know that he had been engaged for three years; that he was

an engaged man when he first met her at Simla last cold weather.

This assurance he had asked Dearle to procure for him, in writing; and Dearle, when he promised to do so, had not realised in the least the sorry part he was called upon to play,

He told himself as he knocked at the door that it was quite unlikely that he would see his lady of the mist to-day; she was probably out, in some city office, doing her daily task of type-writing. But thoughts of her welled up in his heart as he stood waiting for Miss Wilmot to appear.

This was not such a room as he had been prepared to see. He had pictured a lodging-house, with gilt mirrors, green rep furniture and crochet antimacassars. This room had a worn Persian carpet on the floor, deep red-tinted walls showed up the severity of its old and rare furniture; there were two or three fine oil-paintings, evidently family portraits, and some mezzotints after good masters. There were comfortable chairs, and a most business-like bureau writing-table piled with papers; also a grand piano by Erard. Fresh chrysanthemums in Vallauris pottery lighted up the November atmosphere, and gave the finishing touch to a room that at once proclaimed the tastes and the good descent of its owner. He had hardly completed his surprised survey when the lady of the mist opened the door and stood before him. Without her hat she was even more striking than with it, he thought; her neat grey dress seemed the embodiment of her misty personality; her manner to himself was grateful and polite, but not cordial.

'I am sorry to have to tell you that Miss Wilmot declines to see you,' she said.

'Does she?' he echoed, in a relieved voice. 'Oh, well, I've done all I can, haven't I?'

'I suppose so,' she replied, with a fleeting smile, which might have been ironical. 'You will, however, be able to take back to your friend, Captain Manners-Langton, the written assurance, for which he is so anxious, that Miss Wilmot intends to have nothing more to do with him.'

'Before you give me the letter,' he said, as she held a paper towards him, 'I should like to know how you are to-day? Is your hurt all right? You are not suffering from the effects of your fall, I hope?'

'Not at all, thank you,' she replied, in the manner of one



who does not intend to converse. 'I am glad to have a chance to thank you again for your prompt and kind help. Now may I ask you to read this short note? Miss Wilmot particularly desires that you should read it, that you may be convinced that you are taking back to your friend the assurance that he is so anxious to possess.'

He took the short note in his hand; it was written in a firm, clear writing.

'DEAR CAPTAIN MANNERS-LANGTON,—A line to say that, after reading your letter of yesterday, I am quite of your opinion that a marriage between us would not be productive of happiness, and that I therefore willingly concur in the final rupture of our engagement.—Yours truly, MARGERY WILMOT.'

'Miss Wilmot is sure that you will not justly complain of her refusal to see you,' softly said the lady of the mist; 'as your friend has acted in the matter through a representative, she feels quite at liberty to do the same. But I am forgetting—here is something to be given to him with the letter.' She gave him a small jeweller's box, evidently containing a ring, and turned away.

He stood stock still, the letter in his hand. 'What a hound I feel!' he remarked, after a pause.

'I am sure nobody could have more delicately conducted negotiations of such a character,' politely said the girl, with double-edged sweetness. 'And now I hope you will excuse me, as I am very busy just at present.'

She had seated herself by the corner of the bureau, not as one who settles down to talk, but as in the act of proceeding to deal with the heap of correspondence which she indicated with a wave of her hand. The man looked at the grace of her slender form as she so sat, and his shame increased. He was not wont to be diffident or tongue-tied before women, but he felt curiously abject now. Yet he must make one effort. He came slowly over to where she sat.

'At least,' he said, 'you will tell me your name, won't you?'

She dropped a long Oriental paper-knife with which she had been playing, and rose. With a decided movement she walked past him towards the door. Then, turning round, and facing him, her hand upon the latch, she said—

'You must excuse me: and I hope you will not think me discourteous if I add that the fact of your friendship with

Captain Manners-Langton deprives me of any wish to be further acquainted with you. Good morning.'

She had opened the door. Nothing remained for Dearle but to walk out. He felt like a beaten dog as with scarlet face and hurried bow he made his escape, and exchanged the delicate, perfumed atmosphere of that charming room for the squalor of the public staircase.

Some two months after these events Captain Charles Manners-Langton bestowed his hand and his pedigree upon Miss Gladys Hopper, whose father lived in a modern Queen Anne palace near Snaresbrook, having made a fortune in boot-laces. The family all felt that the marriage of Gladys had established their social position; the son-in-law had perhaps hardly realised beforehand how much interest his new relations intended to exact for the pretty girl's handsome dower.

At all events, that January, when the long frost had reduced existence in the hunting-box he had taken in the shires to a *tête-à-tête* with his bride, he ran up to town for a few days to look in at his club and find some one to talk to. The first person he met was Hugh Dearle, who had been best man at his wedding, and grumpy with him ever since.

'What are you going to do to-night?' asked the bridegroom eagerly. 'A theatre—come now! I'll treat you! Jove, what a time it seems since we had any fun. Marriage is awfully dull, I tell you that in confidence.'

'Doesn't that partly depend upon whom you marry?'

Charlie ignored the question. 'They say there is a first night at the Hellenic,' he said. 'A new play by a girl—at least Brownsmith has been collaborating with a girl, by all that's strange. Why do you look at me like that?'

'Don't you know who is the girl?' asked Dearle grimly. He took up the newspaper and showed it to him.

#### 'NEW DRAMA IN THREE ACTS—A LATTER-DAY GIRL.'

BY CLEMENT BROWNSMITH AND MISS MARGERY WILMOT.'

'The devil!' said Margery Wilmot's late *fiancé*. 'Well, but I always thought she would do something of the kind—she had it in her. Let's go and see Margery's play, shall we?'

Dearle had no objection to make; if Manners-Langton could go, he could go also; moreover, the possibilities of

seeing or being seen by Miss Wilmot were not great. Dearle had had a great curiosity to see her ever since his encounter with her representative ; concerning whom he seemed to himself to have been thinking, almost without intermission, ever since she showed him the door.

First nights are always interesting, and this one was especially so. For Brownsmith, as is well-known, had never collaborated before, and must have thought very highly of this girl's idea to allow it to be coupled with his mighty name.

It was a good idea ; and the result of collaboration with an expert made it an almost ideal comedy of manners, admirably strung together ; it was full of point, racy and daring, and the dialogue was witty and clean.

There was no doubt about its being a success. The husband of Gladys Hopper gloated over its merits between the acts.

'I'm not at all sure that I didn't make a big mistake over my marriage, Hugh,' he said moodily. 'I don't believe one would ever have got bored living with Margery, she was so full of life and ideas ; it's bad to live with a woman who thinks of nothing else on earth but her frocks, her cooks, and her visiting-list. Why didn't you hold me back from destruction ?'

'It was nothing to do with me,' said Dearle, in the sour, lowering way which he always adopted whenever his embassy to Notting Hill was under discussion. 'I knew nothing of Miss Wilmot, only that you were tremendously sweet on the other one.'

Charlie heaved a long sigh. 'If she can do this at her age, she'll be a celebrated woman in ten years' time ; long before I have induced the mater to call on all my wife's unrepresentable relations.'

The curtain rose on the last act, and almost before its final descent the shouts for 'Author !' burst forth with a good deal more than ordinary first-night vigour.

'Now she'll come,' whispered Manners-Langton to his friend, while his face took on a deep and unbecoming blush under its tan. Dearle also held his breath as the drop-scene was slightly pushed aside and Clement Brownsmith led on a tall willowy girl in white silk, with a huge posy of red roses ; and then he could have groaned aloud and cursed his folly and blindness ; for of course any one but himself would have seen through the thin pretence, and have known that Margery

Wilmot was one and the same person as the lady of the mist.

She stood still before the delighted audience, neither nervous nor too self-confident, but with a composure that seemed as though it held this admiration cheap, and was beyond being hurt by blame or elated by applause. Her deep, proud eyes had in them the same far-away look that they had worn in church during the singing of the anthem. They were fixed upon the auditorium; and after a breathless moment the rapture of admiration in Dearle's gaze drew them, as it had drawn them in the foggy street; the two glances met, and Margery saw both Dearle and his companion.

Dearle saw, or thought he saw, something in her look and in the very slight smile that broke across her sweet, serious mouth. At least she looked at him without contempt! . . . It was over in a flash, and he was gritting his teeth at the gesture of friendly intimacy with which Mr. Brownsmith, an unmarried man himself, was holding back the curtain for the departure of his beautiful companion.

Charlie gave a sigh that was almost a groan. 'I hadn't seen her for three years,' he said huskily. 'I had forgotten how lovely she is; if only I had gone to see her myself, instead of sending you, I should never have married the other one.'

'That was not my fault,' said Dearle cheerfully; and he declined his friend's offer of supper, and went home to write a letter.

It was a long one, and it took a very long time to compose. It was full of blots and erasures, and it had to be copied out fair more than once; it was two o'clock in the morning when he went out and dropped it into the post; and then went back, and sat until three, wishing that he had not sent it.

There was no answer for two days, and then there came an envelope bearing the writing that he knew so well, though he had only seen it once. The envelope contained no letter, only a formal intimation on a card that Miss Margery Wilmot would be at home on Thursday afternoons in February, from four o'clock until seven.

This was much. His heart leapt; at least it meant that she had reversed her cruel determination to cut him because of his friendship with Manners-Langton; and what a cad the fellow was, after all! or else his marriage had debased him. He

wondered how he could ever have been so much his friend as to undertake his dirty work for him.

The pretty room had several people in it when he arrived, as early as he dared, on the first Thursday in February. There was Brownsmith, whose distinguished head, prematurely grey, was the first that he identified. An elderly lady, of charming manners, was doing the honours for Margery; and the girl herself walked about among her visitors, making them known to each other, and chatting to first one and then another. She looked so beautiful, with the radiance of success upon her delicate face, that Dearle felt crushed by her. She was somebody—a woman that people had heard of, a woman whom people were anxious to know. In some inexplicable way he had not been ten minutes in the room before he knew that to get there at all was a privilege for which some would have given much.

Presently she was at his side.

‘I am so glad you could come,’ she softly said. ‘May I introduce you to Miss —’

‘No, for pity’s sake don’t introduce me to anybody yet, not until I have had one word with you; afterwards, I will talk to anybody for you, and hand tea-cups till seven o’clock, if you have any need of my services; but now, first, I want to know, have you forgiven me?’

She turned those eyes which had drawn his soul out of his breast at one glance, up to his honest grey ones, and seemed as if she searched his face.

‘I think you are to be trusted,’ she slowly said.

‘Try me,’ he blurted out hoarsely.

‘One thing I should like to know,’ she went on very gravely, ‘and we will have that out at once. Did you know, had you any idea, that Captain Manners-Langton has twice been to call here?’

His face of stupefied astonishment answered her.

‘It is true, he has had that assurance,’ said Margery, ‘Of course he has not been admitted. If I allow you to visit here it must be on the express stipulation that he does not even know that you come. It is no affair of his.’

‘I promise you that, or any other condition that you may be disposed to make,’ he replied. ‘Let me only be near you, and I will be as patient as you please. Only one thing I want to know before I . . .’ he came to a sudden pause.

'Well, what is it? Speak quickly, for I must go and welcome other friends.'

'No,' he said, 'I will not ask; you would not tell me to-day; I will try and find out for myself.'

'Knowledge gained in that way is the most valuable after all,' she smiled, as she moved away from him.

'I am going now,' he said, two hours later. 'I think I have found out what I wanted to; and I shall come again next Thursday, in order to make further observations. Tell me this one thing—did my letter surprise you?'

'Yes, a good deal. Are you in the habit of following young ladies home?'

'I told you in my letter I never did so but once. And no other ever showed me the door, and desired that we might be better strangers.'

'I think I was too hard upon you; but you see, what could I do? It would have been even more brutal to tell you my name, then, would it not?'

'So that really only a delicate consideration for my feelings prompted you to dismiss me in that way?'

'Have it so, if you like.'

'Do you still go to church on Sunday evenings?'

'Always, unless I am ill.'

'I was never very great on church-going,' said Dearle thoughtfully, 'but I liked that church. I think I shall go there again some day; perhaps next Sunday; it seems such a long time to wait until next Thursday to see you again.'

She had accompanied him out of the room, and they were standing together on the landing of the public staircase.

Suddenly the memory of her face that night, with the light gone out of it, smote upon his heart.

'Oh, Margery' he broke out, seizing her hand in his. 'Can you ever forgive me that moment's anguish?—could you ever respect the man who blundered so cruelly?'

And then she turned her eyes on him with wet lashes, and her smile was tremulous.

'I think' she softly said, 'that I took my revenge; we are quits; and—I don't think I like a man to be *too* humble.'

*A FESTA AT SAN GIMIGNANO.*

OF all the saints in the Roman Calendar one of the simplest and sweetest is Santa Fina, a child of fifteen, who lived her life in the little mountain town of San Gimignano six hundred years ago.

‘Monte Reggione di torre si corona,’

sings Dante of one little Tuscan town, and the same might be said of San Gimignano, which stands poised on a spur of Monte Cormacchio, and is familiarly known as San Gimignano delle belle torre, from the numerous high towers which embellished it. Some of them are still standing, and their straight gray forms intersect the sky-line from whatever direction one approaches. It is well worth a visit for its many treasures of art and antiquity; and though March is rather early in the season, there is then the additional interest of the festival of its little girl saint on the 12th of that month, the anniversary of her death, when the town and countryside turn out to do her honour. Happening to be there about that time, I stayed on for it, as my landlady and the good priest of the Collegiata, or parish church, assured me it was well worth seeing, and they dwelt on the glories of the band, a famous preacher from afar, and the gorgeous decorations. My thoughts dwelt rather on the short life that had shed its influence so far down the course of time. She had done nothing very extraordinary, but the memory of her life of exceptional devotion and piety is ever green and fresh in the minds of the people of her native town.

Fina de' Ciardi was born in San Gimignano in 1238. She was the daughter of a certain Cambio and Imperiera his wife, who were of good family but very poor. Fina was noted from her earliest days for her docility, gentleness, and piety. She helped in the household work, and spent her spare time in prayer and meditation. At the age of ten she fell ill, and

lingered for five years, during which time she insisted on lying on a plank bed till (as the old chronicler says) her flesh clave to the wood. There are some panels in the Palazzo Comunale painted by Taddeo di Bartolo with scenes from Santa Fina's life. She is represented lying on her plank bed in a bare room, and the poverty of her surroundings is emphasised by the introduction of little black mice running about. Her old nurse Beldia is generally depicted by her side. When her mother died a certain charitable lady named Bonaventura took Fina and Beldia into her house, and helped to nurse Fina till her death.

An ecstatic frame of mind combined with stern discipline of the body had its usual result, and little Fina saw visions, and finally died in the odour of sanctity. Marvellous things are recorded of her death. Eight days before Saint Gregory appeared to announce her approaching dissolution; at the hour of her passing the bells tolled, untouched by human hands, while from her wooden bed wallflowers started into bloom. These flowers, which grow all over the walls and towers of San Gimignano, are called to this day Fior' di Santa Fina; and finally, while her nurse Beldia was bending over her bier, Fina laid one of her dead hands on hers, and Beldia was straightway healed of a malady from which she had suffered many years.

From the day of her death the San Gimignanesi have looked upon her as their special saint, and if any evil was averted from the town it was to the advocacy of Santa Fina they attributed their safety. At the beginning of the fourteenth century an altar was consecrated to her in the Collegiata, and in 1325 the Commune ordered that her relics should be more carefully guarded, and that an annual offering of wax candles should be burnt at her shrine. In 1460 it was proposed to build a 'bella ed onorevole' chapel in her honour, but this project was delayed, owing to political changes and a visitation of the plague; however, in 1465 the Podesta Onofriedi Pietro brought it forward again, and this time to some purpose. It was arranged that the Spedaliere di Santa Fina were to pay 120 florins and twenty bushels of grain yearly while the chapel was building, and the Commune was to do the same. Finally, on May 16, 1468, Giuliano da Majano came from Florence and made the designs for the chapel. His work is at once simple and dignified, and makes a fit setting for the altar-piece, which



is by his more famous brother Bendetto, and is one of the most beautiful things at San Gimignano. It is of white marble picked out with gold, and is carved in bas-reliefs with scenes from the life of the saint. Under this frieze are four graceful angels, while above is a Madonna encircled with seraphims, with an angel adoring at each side, and below are two angels holding candelabra. On the coffin-shaped urn, which, like every bit of the work of Bendetto da Majano's, is exquisitely carved, the following distiches can be read :—

'Virginis ossa latent tumulo, quem suspicio, hospes,  
Hæc decus exemplum, præsidiumque.'

'Nomen Fina fuit, patria hæc ; miracula quæris ?  
Perlege quæ paries, vivaque signa docent.'

These lines are believed to have been written by Gio Batista Cantalicio, as they were published with other lines written in honour of the saint in a collection of verses by him printed in 1493.

On the side walls of the chapel are two frescoes by Domenico Ghirlandajo. The one to the right represents the apparition of Saint Gregory, and is obviously suggested by Taddeo di Bartolo's panel of that subject ; the one to the left represents the funeral obsequies of the saint, and is perhaps the finest thing that Ghirlandajo ever did. The moment chosen is when Santa Fina healed her old nurse, and the grouping of the priests, choristers, and crowd enabled the artist to introduce many heads which are familiar in the Florentine "genre" pictures of that period, notably those of the Medici family and their adherents. In the background are seen the towers of San Gimignano, from one of which an angel is depicted tolling the funeral knell.

Ghirlandajo was on his way back to Florence from painting in the Sistine Chapel at Rome when he stopped at San Gimignano. Here he made the acquaintance of a young artist, Sebastian Mainardi, who became his pupil, and is reported to have helped in the above-named frescoes. This I should doubt, with the exception perhaps of the figure of Saint Gregory, but he did paint the four Evangelists on the vaulted roof and the six bishops above the cornice, and there are other works by him in various buildings at San Gimignano. He went to Florence with his master, married his sister, and

helped him with the famous frescoes in Santa Maria Novella. There was originally a splendid deep blue ground with gold stars to the ceiling of Santa Fina's Chapel, and we read in the archives that the Commune paid on November 30, 1477, the sum of eight liras a pound for four pounds weight of blue, and 500 pieces of gold to paint the chapel. Unfortunately in 1832 the blue was changed to pink, the colour of the saint, and the pavement, which was originally of beautiful Valenza tiles, was relaid with marble. Santa Fina was not canonised till October 5, 1481. There was a severe visitation of the plague that year, and the survivors, believing that her intercession had saved them, as an act of public gratitude obtained this honour for their saint, through the influence of a certain M. Ludovic Ridolfo, then abbreviatore apostolico in Rome, and it was confirmed by Pope Paul III. in 1538. She has now two festivals, one on the anniversary of her death, and one on the first Sunday in August. This last was specially voted her after the plague of 1481, and lasts three days.

From the earliest dawn on the 12th of March the bells were rung with pious zeal, and all the morning the sound of many feet in the stone-paved street showed that the town and countryside were turning out *en fête*. The streets were full of peasant women with sunburnt faces and bright black eyes, and coloured handkerchiefs on their heads. The men were all in their Sunday-best, and gayest of the gay were the members of the city band, who strutted about in all the pride of uniforms and white-plumed hats. The hostess of the Leone Bianca politely invited me to go with her to the Collegiata, which stands in the chief Piazza, so at a little before eleven we sallied forth, and joined the throng which was wending its way in that direction. The great event of the day is Santa Fina's Benediction and Procession, which takes place after the sermon. When we arrived we found the preacher still in the pulpit, which was gorgeously decorated for the occasion, steps and all being draped with red brocade. Over this in front a beautiful piece of needlework was suspended, and on one side a blue silk banner, on which was painted the girlish form of Santa Fina rising to heaven, robed in pale pink, and holding in her hand a bunch of wallflowers.

The Proposta and clergy were seated in the nave, and the crowd clustered round as thick as bees, though as far as one could see the last named were not paying much attention to

what seemed to a phlegmatic northerner a very dramatic account of Santa Fina's life. Along the side wall a row of peasant women were seated, waiting to have their little bundles of food blessed by the saint. Their gay-coloured handkerchiefs brightened up the dark wall behind them. My hostess explained that we had better visit the shrine at once, as later it would be too crowded to get near it, so I followed her as she elbowed a way through the press of people till we reached it. Never has Bendetto da Majano's work been seen to better advantage. The marble and gilding gleamed bright and clear in the blaze of many tapers, and Ghirlandajo's frescoes on the side of the walls seemed almost black in comparison, in spite of their pure colour. The skeleton of the saint wrapped in tinselled gauze reposes in a glazed case under the altar. We knelt down and peered at it as it lay in the shadow cast by the altar-table, and dimly discerned by the flicker of one little taper the long, slender form and the little skull with its row of teeth in perfect preservation after all these years—a great contrast to the head of St. Catherine at Siena, but in that case what one can only describe as pious mutilation has taken place, and the gaps left by the teeth, which have been sent elsewhere as relics, combined with the peculiar grin of a fleshless skull, give an expression far from agreeable. Little Santa Fina fell into better hands. When her chapel was built her relics were put in the marble sarcophagus over the altar, and we read that when the chapel was altered in 1732 her bones were taken out of the urn and 'arranged in a natural recumbent position in a casket of carved and gilded wood with glass sides.' This was placed above the altar, and must have considerably spoilt the look of Bendetto da Majano's work, but happily in 1881 the chapel was done up again and restored to its original aspect, and the casket placed where it now stands, with the addition of a gilded iron-work 'grille' in front for greater security, which was removed on the day of the Festa. The gilded iron gates of a little alcove in the centre of the altar had also been thrown open for the day, and exposed to the pious worshippers a bust of the saint. Whether of painted wood or 'gesso,' I was not near enough to ascertain; a crown made of seed pearls was on the head, and a veil of delicate needlework over it, the work of a devout San Gimignano lady, said my guide. The little chapel was crowded, men, women, and children pressing round the shrine, and

though most were of the poorer classes I did not see one come away without putting something into the money-box on the altar.

When the preacher had finished the Proposto and clergy went to the chapel, took down the head, and carried it in solemn procession through the nave and up into the pulpit, where it was exposed to the adoration of the people. Like a gust of wind passing over corn the whole congregation bent as one man as the sacred head passed. Then followed the ceremony of Santa Fina's Benediction. The Proposto held the bust, while the two priests who stood one on each side of him, removed the veil and the crown, and opened the head, the back half of which opens backwards on a hinge. The poor people crowded round the pulpit, and the choristers ran up and down the steps fetching and carrying the little bundles of food wrapped in white napkins, the mass books, and rosaries handed up to be blessed. These were given to the two priests, who made the sign of the cross with them over the opened head, and then gave them back to be returned to their owners. These proceedings took about half an hour, during which time the town band stationed at the bottom of the church played with great energy. Then the head was closed, the crown and veil replaced, the head brought down from the pulpit, and the procession reformed. This time it went round the church. First came the members of the Confraternity of Santa Fina, carrying large tapers, and dressed in long, loose garments, rather suggestive of night-gowns. There were about twenty of them. Then followed the choristers and priests in due order, the Canons in purple edged with red, making a fine note of colour. Finally came the Proposto and his little group of assistants carrying the head, and between them and the Canons walked the Sindico and another civic dignitary, in dress-clothes, and wearing their scarves of office. The dense crowd parted to let the procession pass, but it took a long time, as numbers of people had waited to have their things blessed then instead of passing them up to the pulpit. My hostess and her friends were fastening their rosaries together to pass to the priest when the head should reach the place where we were standing, and they asked me if I would like to have something blessed by the saint. I gave a ring, a turquoise engraved with 'El Allah' in Arabic characters, and it made one of a little collection of rosaries and silver bangles which was duly passed to receive

Santa Fina's benediction. Near where we stood the procession turned at right angles and went back to the chapel, which was on the opposite side of the church, and just as Santa Fina, amid the strains of the organ, and the sound of many bells, was replaced in her shrine, the sun suddenly shone out, and poured down from the clerestory windows a flood of light on the animated scene below. The rays penetrated through the soft blue haze caused by the censers, lit up the gay colours of the crowd, and the gorgeous vestments of the priests, while in the background, like a pure and delicate vision, the white shrine gleamed forth. Then followed a Mass said at the shrine by the Proposto and the Canons. Many people stayed for it, but the chief event of the day was over, and most of the crowd left the church. The band trooped out, and the Confraternity of Santa Fina, carrying their crucifix and sky-blue banner, and accompanied by their chaplain, marched off at a brisk pace. Every one went to rest and refresh themselves after the excitement of the morning, and the town slept for a space.

Later in the day the streets filled again, and soon after four o'clock I sallied forth once more with the hostess of the Leone Bianco for the second part of the programme. This was the procession of the Order of the Confraternity of Santa Fina, with the band, to the chapel where the sacred plank-bed was on view. It is a board of solid oak, about 5 feet long and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad, and it is framed and glazed and fixed over the altar, and is only shown on the festivals of the saint. The hospital was founded about the time of Fina's death in 1258, and was formerly affiliated to the great Hospital of Santa Maria della Scalla of Siena, which dates from A.D. 832. When we arrived we found the entrance strewn with bay leaves, and the little chapel crowded to its utmost. The heat from the burning tapers, the crush of the throng, and the fumes of the incense made me glad to beat a retreat as soon as possible without hurting the feelings of my guide. I noticed four lunettes on the walls attributed to Mainardi of St. Bartolo, San Gimignano, St. Peter Martyr, and St. Niccolo, but they have been spoilt by repainting. As we were early we walked to the end of the street, to where once stood the Porto San Jacopo now demolished. From the platform outside is a very fine panorama of the hilly region to the south-east of San Gimignano. Poggibonsi lies hidden in a valley, but the hillsides are covered with villages and little towns. From below where we stood rose

the 'click' of the 'palle' or bowls, a favourite game with the Italian peasants.

Meanwhile the street outside Santa Fina's chapel was filling fast, and the crowd was getting impatient as the procession still tarried. At last the distant strains of the band were heard approaching, and finally round the corner from the Via San Matteo came the members of the Confraternity of Santa Fina, carrying their crucifix and attended by their chaplain, and preceded by the band. They came at a quick march down the steep, narrow street, surrounded (and followed by crowds of people, not a hundredth part of whom were able to get into the chapel for the service. They were able, however, to enjoy the band, which, stationed outside, played with great energy at intervals. Having had enough of the crowd I went back through the half-empty streets and out into the country by the Porta San Matteo. There were still many groups loitering about merrymaking and enjoying the Festa thoroughly, and one cannot help being struck by the light hearts of the Italians and the facility with which they can forget their troubles. It was only ten days since the terrible news of the defeat at Adowa had come; fifty men from San Gimignano were in Africa, and no list had yet been published of those who had escaped of the rank and file. However, the Italian nature seems to rebound without difficulty from the deepest gloom, and a natural *gaieté de cœur* reasserts itself easily in this gentle, courteous people.

Leaving the dusty white road which leads the traveller eventually to Certaldo, I turned down the hillside through green 'podere,' fresh and cool after the dust and heat of the town, across little streams, and up other green soft slopes, till I found myself on the brow of a small hill facing back on San Gimignano. The valley lay between, and the 'belliqueux profil' of the 'cité toscane' towered on the further side, while overhead white clouds 'gathered and unfurled,' awaiting the sunset glow to crown the city with a rosy canopy. Retracing my steps along the road I came on a little homestead wedged into the hillside. As I approached a white pigeon solemnly hopped down the steps from the open door, from which emerged an elderly peasant woman carrying a little child, and followed by a big black cat. They came up to the road, and the woman looked towards San Gimignano, as though on the look-out for some one, while the cat, spying me, whisked his tail wrathfully

as I approached, and evidently not liking my appearance retired to the house as I drew near, and surveyed me from a safe distance. The woman greeted me with the gentle 'buona sera a Lei,' the courteous salutation of the Tuscan peasant, and we entered into conversation. Her young folk were all at the Festa, she told me, and she was taking care of her grandchild. Had I heard of the Festa? Ah! I had been at it. She had been told that some forestieri (strangers) had been present. Was it not beautiful? And their saint, was she not a blessed one? Did I know the story of her first miracle? No? Would I like to hear it? So nursing the child, who gazed solemnly at me with its big black eyes, she set to work to tell me about Santa Fina's first miracle.

It was a wonderful evening, and as I listened to the old peasant's tale my eyes wandered from her pleasant homely face to the landscape spread at my feet. The level rays of the setting sun touched up hill after hill, as they stood clearly defined in that mistless atmosphere. Villas, companiles, cottages, sparkled white against the purples and grays of the mountains and valleys. The distant Chianti hills glowed with a reddish purple, that note of colour peculiar to Tuscan sunsets, which ranges from deep red violet, the colour of certain violets found in shady nooks of the Apennines, to the most delicate amethyst. Here and there rose tall black cypresses pointing skywards, marking no doubt some boundary-line, but seeming to call attention to some dark secret buried at their feet. A few clumps of ilex-oak struck the only other sombre note and seemed to be placed there to emphasise the rare beauty of the colouring with a more than Japanese felicity. 'Olive-sandled' slopes rose out of the valleys already in shadow at their feet, while higher up patches of young corn shimmered in the evening light with that wonderful green which can be best described as 'living.' Under the olives near by the dark purple of the anemones was just visible as they closed for the night, while clumps of daffodils in bud broke the surface of the near hillside, growing up strong and lush from the rich dark soil. From the dusty bank by the road the intense blue of the grape hyacinths with their little rims of pure white caught the eye—a colouring so Eastern in character, that particular blue being found so frequently in old Persian tiles, that one felt as though they had strayed hither from some distant land, and the sweet half-sickly scent added to their semi-oriental distinction.

From the valley below rose faintly the sound of running water. No other sound broke the silence which brooded over the quiet land like a spell—a silence doubly sweet after the noise and din of the Festa, and which the voice of the good peasant seemed to enhance and not to disturb.

‘For you must know, Signora,’ she began, ‘that the dear saint was noted for her goodness from the time she could walk. Her parents were very poor, and she helped her mother with the things of the house, always finding time to pray to the Madonna and saints, and spending long hours at their shrines, which she decorated with flowers. Her first miracle took place when she was about eight years old, and happened in this wise. Her mother sent her to fetch water from the well. She and her companions all went together down to the Porta della Fonte, outside of which, as the Signora no doubt knows, is the great fountain where the washerwomen work. On the way the girls began to play and one of Santa Fina’s friends let fall her pitcher and it was broken. “Oh, what shall I do?” she cried, in tears. “Let be,” said the saint, “it is the will of God, and if we pray to Him He will do what seems best to Him.” So she knelt down and prayed, and after she had prayed they took the pitcher up, and lo and behold it was mended. When the saint returned home her mother said to her: “Where have you been, Fina? Why have you been so long away?” Then the saint told what had happened, and her mother was astonished and said no more, but from that day she recognised that God had marked Fina out for His very own.’

Her voice ceased, and the spell was broken. The cat had returned quietly, and was rubbing itself against my dress, and the child grew restless in its grandmother’s arms. In the distance round the bend of the road appeared some of the folk returning from the Festa with merry laughter and talk. I bid goodbye to my friend, and returned up the hill to where stood the town of San Gimignano, the towers no longer gray, but flushed with the red sunset light, which the clouds floating over head caught up and reflected with yet greater brightness. By the time I had reached the gate the after-glow was rapidly fading away. The moment had come

‘When evening cuts  
The red off, calls the glory from the gray,’

and the great ridge of Monte Cormacchio rose stern and cold in the still western light. Santa Fina’s Festa was over.

ETHEL HALSEY.



*AMONG THE BRACKEN.*

THERE is hardly anything more beautiful than a fine growth of bracken, whether seen in its first fresh greenness or in the golden and russet tints of its declining splendour ; and although most attractive of all when seen out on the wild moors, crowning some sandy hollow or fringing the rough, deep-rutted roadways, there is also a great charm about the luxuriant coverts that spread themselves beneath the great trees of our parks.

Never shall I forget my impressions, as a child, of the bracken forests that rise up so majestically in Richmond Park, for example. They were high above my head, those tall, branching ferns, so wonderfully green and so sweet-smelling ; and as I write it almost seems to me that I can hear once again the quick patter of raindrops on the leafy roof beneath which my sisters and I had taken shelter from a summer shower. How mysteriously refreshing was the sound of those falling drops, and how lovely were the myriads of jewels seen sparkling and gleaming on the green, interlacing crosses, when the sun reappeared, and a rainbow spanned the sombre clouds, swept together in the west !

‘ Refracted sunbeams, through the shower,  
A humid radiance from it pour ;  
Whilst colour into colour fades  
With blended lights and softening shades !’

The luminous masses of floating vapour—the conflict between rain and sunshine—the glorious arch of almost unearthly beauty glowing against the background of as yet unconquered storm-clouds—these things filled me even in those childish days with a sense of deepest wonder, almost amounting to rapture, and from my nest in the bracken I watched and waited until the brilliant prismatic colours gradually faded away—the free, bold curve imperceptibly dissolving into nothingness. Then when the sky was once more of a cloudless blue, and the sun had dried each trickling raindrop, it was a new delight to see the

birds coming from their hiding-places, preening their feathers, chirruping and singing ; whilst now and again a rabbit would skip by, stamping its woolly feet—its tail flashing white. The bracken, too, looked its best after the shower, and so did the trees in the neighbouring enclosure.

I remember, especially, the look of a fine Spanish chestnut-tree, in full foliage, and which hung its graceful branches over the wire railing of this enclosure. It was a great favourite of ours, and although not boasting the milky flower-cones of the horse-chestnuts, near at hand, the slight pendulous racemes of blossoms swinging from its boughs were always full of charm in our eyes. Even the peculiar, rather overpowering fragrance of these blossoms was inhaled by us with grateful appreciation, and however insignificant the long catkins might appear as they dangled from the midst of the glossy green foliage, at least they gave promise of something far better than would ever be produced by those splendid spikes of rose-tinted bloom—the glory and crown of the horse-chestnut trees.

As if it was only yesterday I remember how eagerly we watched for the appearance of the fascinating green balls—hairy rather than prickly—and which, when at last gathered and opened, disclosed triplets of smooth, pale-brown chestnuts, ivory-white within, and most deliciously sweet and toothsome. We rarely waited until the chestnuts were really ripe and the splitting involucre disclosed them of their own accord ; but when, later on, we searched among the dead autumnal leaves that covered the ground, it often happened that they were found in this delightful state—the green spines withered and brown, and the nuts falling at a touch from their lurking-places.

By this time much of the bracken had been cut away, and the 'golden sunshine of the withering fern' replaced the swaying fields of greenness.

I think it was in July that the bracken was at its best, according to our views, a dense growth, high above our heads in parts, and full of vigorous life and freshness ; and our appreciation of that ferny thicket was, I am sure, almost as great as that of the herds of deer whom we watched with such deep interest from our vantage-ground near the enclosure, and who would sometimes come so close to our retreat that we could count the spots on their delicately coloured coats. A fierce battle took place on one occasion between two royal-looking stags, and we could see their red sides heaving, whilst

the rattling of their antlers was loud and constant as they fenced, head to head, with many a skilful thrust and parry.

It was an interesting sight, yet we were rather relieved on the whole when the combatants suddenly separated and sped fleetly away—there was something decidedly alarming in the sight of the great branching antlers, especially when used in such deadly earnest.

But at the same time we were very proud to think that our favourite haunts were also the haunts of these majestic, warlike creatures as well as of the timid does and fawns, and, indeed, there was nothing that gave us greater pleasure than studying their habits at a safe distance.

We liked to imagine that the bracken had the quality of making human beings invisible, and many were the arguments brought forward in favour of this supposition. Not only was it that the birds, rabbits, and deer seemed to pay little regard to our presence, but we remembered thrilling tales of fugitives who in olden times were saved by the friendly ferns from their oppressors. Why should this quality be lost?

We were extremely fond in those days of fairy tales and legends, and the history of Nymphidia and her valiant efforts in behalf of her mistress filled us with delight, particularly when we discovered that fern-seeds were used by the fairy to add potency to her spells.

Puck, on behalf of his master King Oberon, was in hot pursuit of the recreant queen, but the faithful Nymphidia was ever on guard, and after hiding Queen Mab and her maids of honour in an empty hazel-nut she proceeded to work diverse charms to prevent the nearer approach of the enemy.

‘And first her fern-seed doth bestow,  
The kernel of the mistletoe ;  
And here and there as Puck should go,  
    With terror to affright him,  
She nightshade strews to work him ill,  
Therewith her vervain and her dill,  
That hinders witches of their will,  
    Of purpose to despise him.’<sup>1</sup>

We children would have liked to practise some of Nymphidia’s fairy arts when our time in the park was up, and the voice of our guardian to be heard entreating us to make our appearance.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Nymphidia ; or, The Court of Fairy,’ by Michael Drayton.

And many were the spores gathered from the margins of the fern-leaves and carefully treasured, in the hope that they might save us from our fate !

'We have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible,' was one of our favourite quotations, and it mattered little to us when we were assured that it was the seed of the flowering fern (*Osmunda regalis*), and not the insignificant seed of the bracken, that was once held to have the power of making invisible.

The *Osmunda regalis* was an unknown quantity to us, but the bracken was everywhere present, a wonderful, enchanting growth, which even without charm or spell formed the very best of hiding-places, objectively, if not subjectively, rendering us invisible for the time being, and which also to our certain knowledge bore inscribed within its stalk strange, mystic characters.

But as regarded these hieroglyphics, I do not remember who it was who first taught us to cut the stem of the bracken slantwise, and who assured us that we should then see an exact representation of 'King Charles in the tree.' At least I can distinctly recall how eagerly we pored over those mysterious markings !

Sometimes we fancied we had really found King Charles, at other times it was the spread-eagle which had given our fern its botanical name (*Pteris aquilina*) that was most clearly discernible, or again we imagined we could trace the outlines of a kneeling figure or of a knight with spear and shield.

But not till many years afterwards did we hear that it was the initials of the 'Holy Name' which in many countries had been discovered by the eyes of simple faith written in the heart of the fern ; and this was doubtless the explanation of the bracken's supposed efficacy in cases of witchcraft—the power ascribed to it of protecting those in danger—of discovering hidden treasure. And a reason was also found for the high position it holds in the nomenclature of sacred plant-lore.

In Scandinavia we learnt from a 'Flora Sacra' the bracken was known as the '*Korsblom*,' or Crosswort ; in Switzerland and Germany as the 'Jesus Christ wort' ; in Ireland as the holy fern or 'God's Fern' ; whilst everywhere it was held to be a safeguard against the approaches of evil in whatsoever shape appearing.

On St. John's Eve, when the powers of darkness were sup-

posed to be in special force, the bracken was greatly in demand, and in Normandy and Brittany the tradition holds good even to the present day as regards the security obtained from witchcraft and the attacks of evil spirits. An authority on the subject, whilst referring to the use made of the bracken in Gothic architecture and notably in some of our old cathedrals, goes on to speak of having seen in Provence bracken ferns laid upon the midsummer eve bonfires before they were set alight, and a priest coming with holy water to bless their making. The same authority had also observed the shepherds of Brittany fashioning crosses of the bracken for the protection of their pastures—sometimes threading the fern-ribs with the purple bells of the foxglove—the ‘Doigtiers de Notre Dame’—to add to their efficiency.

But within my own knowledge the bracken was thought much of, and quite recently a letter had come to me from Ireland in which some children of Kilkenny were described as cutting the stalks of the bracken to find the sacred initials, even as in the days of our childhood we had looked for the figure of ‘King Charles in the tree.’

A bit of stalk cut from the bracken growing upon Irish soil was enclosed in this letter, together with a pen-and-ink drawing of the device discovered. . . .

‘For gentlest uses, oftimes Nature takes  
The work of fancy from her willing hands ;  
And such a beautiful creation makes  
As renders needless spells and magic wands,  
And for the boldest tale belief commands.’

It is difficult to trace out the manifold windings and intricacies of ecclesiastical plant-lore ; but at least it is pleasant to have the familiar beauty of the bracken linked about with associations and memories, and if Fairyland fades away, together with other childish credences, the regard which is felt for the gracious hardy plant in so many different countries among so many different nationalities is something which remains, forming, as it were, a bond of union, and this whether the fern is held in esteem for its usefulness and its beauty, or because of the strange and the holy associations that have gathered themselves about its name—the shadow of the Cross which rests for ever upon its tripartite leaves and lofty branching stem.

*THE STRONG GOD CIRCUMSTANCE.*

BY HELEN SHIPTON, AUTHOR OF 'THE HERONS,' 'DAGMAR,' ETC.

---

BOOK I.'OF THE THREE KALENDARS.'

---

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE SECOND ONE-EYED KALENDAR.

'Others were engaged in making a virtue of necessity, which seemed to me a good and useful work !'—RABELAIS.

To Arthur Kenyon it had always been a necessity to 'put himself forward'—to count for something wherever he might find himself. He could no more help it than he could help growing eager over anything he was engaged in, from the hunting down of an elusive Greek participle to the capture of an equally elusive rat in Mr. Gideon Elliot's dilapidated byre. Fate herself, in her terrible mortar that grinds heart and soul, can hardly bray out of a man an integral part of his character such as this.

But between whiles he knew well enough that it would be harder to go on living at Cross Rigg than it had been to come there, that the worst of the struggle lay before, not behind.

The only thing for it was to live in the present ; never to look back, still less to look forward on the featureless waste of years. And it did not do to go to bed at night until one was tired out and, as it were, drunk with weariness.

Once or twice, as Arthur took his candle and opened the little door that led from his sitting-room, and paused, and dared not trust himself alone as yet with his thoughts, he remembered the hint his host had let fall concerning that antechamber.

Certainly there were dark thoughts enough lying in wait there—why not too the devil that whispers in the ears of desperate men?

But so far he had pluck enough left to resist the devil, to fight off the black mood of utter despondency by every means in his power—to work and talk as long as there was any one stirring to speak to—to read till eyes and brain refused attention any longer, and then to walk the breezy upland roads till he was almost asleep upon his feet, and they seemed to take him of themselves to the door that was now always left open for him.

Morning brought always a fresh stock of courage, by the mere fact that it brought plenty to do.

There was an iron building to be erected that was to serve as a chapel on Sundays and a night-school and club-room in the week; and since no one but Arthur Kenyon thought it necessary or desirable, and he was by no means in a position to do the work out of his own pocket, this involved much writing of letters, and a great deal of personal labour. There were temporary arrangements to be carried on in a farmhouse kitchen, for of course he could not wait, as most men would have done, for his 'tin tabernacle' to be finished. There were sick to be visited, and oddly enough Arthur did not at all dislike that part of his duty, novel though it was to him. Suffering did not seem to him now an anomaly, and sometimes here it was refreshingly simple, and could be comforted or even cured. And there were two new and quite distinct ways of living to be comprehended and shared—the life down in the valley, of the rough navvies who had spent their laborious years over pick and shovel, and the life on the wild hillside, of the men who wrung a hard living out of the unwilling soil, as their fathers had done before them.

Both surprised Arthur Kenyon by their knowledge and its limitations, by their crass ignorance of most of what lay outside their own immediate sphere, and by their strange hereditary cunning and *savoir faire* in all that lay within it. They were specialists, each in his own line; and the whilom College Fellow, for a wonder, could divine enough of their knowledge to respect its thoroughness.

Life at Cross Rigg was not without its mysteries in which Arthur took more interest than he might have done had all been well with him. He saw little of Rachel Sherwin, and

next to nothing of her daughter, but the presence of a beautiful girl in the homely farmhouse was not to be ignored. At the least, it was like being under the same roof with a very lovely picture, with this additional interest, that you never knew in what room you might next have a brief view of it, or what new graces of form or colour it might display. How the girl came by her quaint name of Lesley, or why she should speak like a lady instead of with her mother's refined yet intensely provincial accent, were as yet unsolved problems, since Arthur would not question old Elliot, and could not question his 'women-folk,' who were very careful not to give him the opportunity.

August glided into September, and with the keen eye of a country squire's son Arthur counted the coveys of partridges which he occasionally put up as he crossed a stubblefield. Once he had a talk with the Lassington keeper, an intelligent man of gloomy views, who shook his head over the invasion of strangers that had come to pass since last game season, and opined that there would be trouble when the pheasants were ready, if not before. He added that some of Mr. Vaughan's friends had had one or two good days on the moor since the 12th. Arthur noticed that he took it for granted that his master had not been out with them; but he would not question the hired servant of a man who had taken no notice of his own presence in the neighbourhood. He was very well pleased not to have been 'called upon,' but he was too well used to being 'somebody' wherever he went not to be also a little surprised.

Sometimes, when some of his own warm partisans wrote protesting against his burying himself in the country, or the editors of Reviews to which he had been wont to contribute wrote suggesting work which he was too restless and too sick at heart to undertake, Arthur felt inclined to envy the man who could be as much of a recluse as he chose, who, whether slightly insane or not, had established a right to go his own way and be let alone by everybody.

It was now a month since he had come to Cross Rigg, and even on those uplands, where they get their hay at Lammas-tide, the small fields of oats and rye were whitening to harvest. The mellow lovely September moon was somewhat late in the month, but none too late to light the reapers home after their long days in the harvest-field. And Arthur Kenyon went



wandering by her light as she hung low in the west, not yet full grown. At midday, in the broad blaze of sunlight, it had been high summer still, but at night, from over those wild moorlands to the west, came a cool whisper that promised the first frost and the equinoctial gales, and the last green leaves of the ash swept down the dark-brown waters of the rain-swollen brook.

The moon slid behind a cloud, and the sigh of the wind grew louder, and Arthur felt a sort of inclination towards the creature-comforts of a lamp and a pipe and a grate with a fire in it. The yearning was as welcome as a suggestion of sleepiness after hours of insomnia. He had wandered rather out of his reckoning, and he said to himself that when the moon gleamed out again, so that he could see his bearings, he would turn and make straight for home. Meanwhile the light was slow in reappearing and he was dead-tired all of a sudden, as persons of a nervous temperament are apt to be when the spirit is over hard upon the flesh. He sat down beside the footpath he had been following, and leaned his back against the dry stone wall that skirted it on one side, and looked wearily out into the soft half darkness.

He had been passing through one of the numerous belts of woodland that lay along these valleys, when he was deserted at once by the light and by all his energy. There was a sort of interest, as he waited, in trying to trace the misty forms of shrub and tree, and listening to the babble of the brook in the hollow far below, and the whisking and pattering of various small creatures of the night busy about their own affairs. But it was a sleepy kind of interest, and his eyes had certainly closed, as it were of themselves, and he had forgotten for the moment where he was, when a light that flashed upon his eyelids startled him awake in an instant.

A tall man with a bullseye lantern was standing over him, and Arthur's first impression was that the village policeman must have chanced to take this most unfrequented track, and be about to arrest him with Elizabethan rigour as a houseless rogue and vagabond. But the newcomer did not wear the familiar blue uniform, nor did his speech agree thereto.

'I ought to apologise for disturbing you,' he said. 'But this is so lonely a place, that I wondered——'

'Whether accident or folly was responsible for my being here so late,' answered Arthur, as he hesitated. 'I suppose the

latter ; for I was not quite sure of my way home to Cross Rigg, and was waiting for the moon to come out again.'

He rose to his feet as he spoke, somewhat stiffly and wearily ; and beyond the dazzling light of the lantern could distinguish little but a pair of eyes that keenly scrutinised him.

'The moon will hardly come out from behind that bank of clouds to-night,' said the other. 'I am walking up towards Cross Rigg, and shall be glad to show you the way. You are lodging up there, are you not ?'

'Yes. My name is Kenyon,' answered Arthur, tolerably well used by this time to having his identity guessed by every country resident he came across. And who but a resident would be wandering about these fields at night ? He spoke like a gentleman, in a soft deep voice, with a curious leisurely tone about it, as of one who was used to speak but little, and to have that little heedfully listened to.

They walked on together, the newcomer pointing out the lie of the country and the direction of Cross Rigg, and Arthur somewhat preoccupied by an idea that had just occurred to him. This must surely be Redmond Vaughan, who, as old Elliott had said, 'was not like other men to look upon,' and did not choose to be looked upon by any. But how, or why ?

The height and grace of his figure forbade the thought of any deformity, and his voice and manner were not those of an eccentric recluse. Even while Arthur wondered the other made his identity certain, speaking as one who was quite used to have himself and his position taken for granted.

'You have been good enough to tell me your name, Mr. Kenyon, and you ought to know mine. It is Vaughan, and I live down yonder at Lassington. I believe you are staying with a tenant of mine, Gideon Elliot.'

'I am,' said Arthur. 'And a curious place that is at Cross Rigg. Surely your population must have been much larger at one time than it is now, to warrant the building of two manor houses up there ?'

'It was once both larger and more influential, I believe. But those houses are accounted for in another way. Has old Elliot never told you the story of the building of the second ?'

‘No. He is not very communicative, possibly because he looks on me as a stranger.’

‘It is the way with our people. They have curious phases of reserve—even those who seem to be outspoken.’

‘Is there any reason why my host should be reserved over the origin of Cross Rigg?’

‘None at all. If any one should be ashamed of that old story it is we Vaughans; but one does not feel much shame for a crime of two hundred years old.’

‘Then may I not hear the story now—at first hand?’

‘Certainly, if it will not weary you to listen; but the legend has too few details to be very interesting, I fear. Not one of those through whom it has been handed down has had the wit to add those little touches which ought to be true, if they are not; and I have no talent that way. I can only give you the plain facts, which are improbable enough—without the motives, at which we can only guess. . . . The Vaughans had not built Lassington Hall then; they had their abode at Cross Rigg, and were altogether smaller folk than they afterwards became. But they owned a good deal of land, and it came to be shared between twin brothers, who fell out over the division of it. The land they could divide, but the old house not so easily, so the elder twin took and kept it, and the younger never forgave him. He vowed that he would have a house as good, and as nearly as possible on the same site; and he raised money on a mortgage and built a house on the extreme verge of his own property, which “marched” with his brother’s almost at the doorstone of the older house. This much is history, for I have the plan of the estate as divided between the brothers, and a copy of the deed of mortgage—which the elder brother got possession of later—and various other papers. What follows I will not swear to.’

‘That means,’ said Arthur Kenyon smiling, ‘that we are coming to some of those effective touches whose absence you regretted just now?’

‘Perhaps. The story goes that the two men lived side by side for many years, never speaking, and silently spitting each other in every way that narrow provincial imaginations could suggest. They were both grown old,

and the elder twin was bed-ridden in what proved to be his last illness, when one day the house was deserted—owing to some fair or other—except for the sick man and an old woman who waited on him. Then the younger brother made his way in. It may have been with some cross-grained idea of a reconciliation before it was too late; but if so, it went amiss. The elder was not going to be taunted with having come to the “far end,” as we say; he was not going to express any penitence for the long quarrel, or any doubt of his own rights. The interview ended in his cursing his younger brother, and wishing that the devil might fly away with him! The other left the room in a passion—there is an awkward stair leading down from that door—perhaps you have seen it?—and he missed his footing. He was an old man and heavy—possibly he had some weakness of the heart beside. Any way, when the sons came back from the fair they found both father and uncle dead—one in his bed, killed by his fit of passion, and the other at the foot of the stair, from whence the old woman had not had strength to move him. . . . That is the pleasantest version of the story. The other version says that finding him lying there alive but helpless, they stabbed him where he lay, by way of saving trouble to all parties, and that they then went over to his house and destroyed the will that he had made—he had no children—and so the two halves of the estate were united again.’

‘Rather a gruesome story,’ said Arthur musingly. ‘Is there any proof of the latter half of it?’

‘No; for you cannot count a supposititious blood-stain on the floor at the foot of the stair. Certainly no will was ever found, but the younger brother had no kith or kin to whom he was very likely to have willed his share; and if there was any foul play connected with his death no one was concerned at the time in proving it.’

‘And no poetic justice pursued the sons?’

‘No, again. They prospered fairly well. One of them died unmarried, and the other left the estate, undivided, to his eldest son. And he it was who built Lassington, and raised the family from mere well-to-do yeomanry to something of a power in the county. We have been fairly respectable ever since; till now that we end, I hope not quite unregretted. So I can find no trace of doom

or curse or hereditary misfortune that might lead me to believe that the half of our goods was ill-gotten.'

Arthur laughed. 'I did not mean that,' he said. 'Indeed I ought to apologise, for I had forgotten your intimate connection with the affair.'

But while he spoke he was thinking of something else. '*Now that we end!*' What did those words mean, spoken by this young stalwart fellow who stepped along so lightly by his side?

'Nay. As I said before, a crime two hundred years old sits easily on the family conscience, though one would not knowingly profit by it. There! at the top of this field we shall strike into the road, not more than a couple of hundred yards above Cross Rigg.'

'I am glad to hear it,' answered Arthur, and this time his voice betrayed the utter weariness he felt.

'I am afraid you are very tired. Surely you ought not to have been out so late and so far.'

'I—did not know I was so dead-beat till I thought of turning home. Don't let me keep you. I know my way now, and I think I will—rest against this gate a little.'

Arthur moved with somewhat dragging footsteps to the gate, and rested his arms upon it. Like many men, he did not care to own to physical discomfiture; and he was very much aware just then that he had been foolish, that he had been over-working and under-feeding himself for a long time past, and that to-night's walk had just been the last straw.

Mr. Vaughan flashed the light of the lantern upon him for an instant, and then turned it away, and came a little nearer.

'I am in no hurry,' he said. 'Presently you had better take my arm, and let me help you to where you will be able to rest more effectually than here. I thought you were ill when I first came upon you down there.'

'I am not ill,' said Arthur. 'I have only been a fool. A night's rest will set me up again.'

'I should say there were longer arrears than that to make up,' said his companion. 'Do they not make you comfortable up yonder?'

'Oh yes! If I have had little inclination to eat or sleep, it is not the fault of my quarters.'

If he had been alone Arthur would perhaps have stayed

another hour where he was, from sheer disinclination to move. But the feeling that the other was waiting made him drag himself from the friendly gate, and it was less trouble to take the arm that was held out to him than to protest that he could do without it.

'You are a clergyman, are you not?' asked Redmond Vaughan after a moment; and as Arthur answered the question he wondered a little, for though his attire was not severely clerical it had conveyed an unmistakable hint of his profession ever since he first 'took Orders.' Then it seemed to him that he saw the bearing of the remark, and he laughed a little.'

'Please don't think that I have been over-doing myself in the usual good curate style,' he said. 'The charge of these few sheep in the wilderness, and what little I do to help the Rector on Sunday, is hardly full employment for an able-bodied man. I have been a fool, as I told you. Aimless rambles in the middle of the night, and, I think, a rat hunt this afternoon, are responsible for my being knocked out of time just now.'

'Very likely,' said the other, in his soft imperturbable voice. 'I know poor old Mr. Markham is not equal to much, and I know what you have been doing down at the waterworks yonder. Don't you want some more money for that iron building you are going to put up? Why didn't you ask me for something?'

Arthur stammered and hesitated a little. He was not sufficiently himself to be able to turn off the question, and he could hardly give the answer, '*I fancied you too nearly a madman to be asked for anything.*'

'I was passing that way the other night, and thought that I must write and ask you if you needed any help. Don't thank me!—it is I who am beholden to you for anything that may help to keep them out of my woods at night. Have them there, disturbing everything, *I will not*; but I am more than willing to try fair means first.'

Again Arthur was surprised, though he was too weary to be more than mistily so. He was too weary also to guess that perhaps his companion had meant to leave him at the gate of the farm, which they had now reached. He did not release the arm on which he was leaning, and after a hardly perceptible pause the other came on with him, and almost piloted

him across the yard, in at the door, and down the dark passage to the room where his lamp was still burning and all his books strewn about, just as he had left them.

Was it treachery to take this opportunity of looking at his new acquaintance? Arthur felt as though it might be, but he had looked before he had made up his mind.

What he saw was a face at once more and less than handsome; a beautiful face—spoilt!

A broad, deep scar all but covered the right side of it, having just missed the eye. One eyebrow and the eyelid beneath it were a little drawn out of place, and the expression of the mouth was slightly marred.

But the eyes were unusually fine, dark and soft, and the moulding of the features on the uninjured side was so perfect as to make the wreck of the others the more piteous.

The injury was not a recent one, evidently; the traces of it had softened out as much as they ever could in this world; and still the sight was one to make the heart ache.

Arthur Kenyon's worst enemy had never denied that he had tact and quickness of perception.

He let his glance remain just as long as if he had been looking at any other strange face that he desired to know again, and took it away as naturally as if he were thinking of little but his own weariness.

But Redmond Vaughan, perhaps instinctively, turned a little away from the lamplight, and meanwhile was returning in kind the questioning look that he had just received.

Arthur's face, naturally pale and always rather thin, did not, as his old nurse used to say, 'praise his pasture' at best, and his looks had not improved by all that had happened before he came to Cross Rigg, or by the regimen he had been undergoing since.

'You look as though you needed something hot and fairly strong, Mr. Kenyon,' was the result of his new friend's scrutiny. 'Have you any brandy or whisky? No? Well, I am sorry for you, for old Elliot's will be of the British variety, but I really can't let you off.'

Arthur was indeed sufficiently knocked up to find it pleasant to have the charge of himself taken out of his own hands. He meditated dreamily upon the strangeness of human events, and watched, though only with the eyes that some people have in the back of their heads, while Redmond Vaughan

took command of the house and all that was in it—revived the sitting-room fire, boiled water, and called up the old man, and made him produce a half-bottle of brandy of rather better quality than might have been expected.

After that one first moment he rarely turned his full face, even when speaking, and avoided the light, but with something of that simple, pathetic, half-unconscious grace with which a woman will try to screen something unseemly in her appearance. And he never used more than one hand, the left, but of that made a deft and rapid use that showed a lifelong apprenticeship. It became apparent presently that he had, for all practical purposes, no right hand. *Something* there was that remained almost hidden in a coat-sleeve of extra length, but it seemed to be perfectly useless.

Arthur hardly knew whether pity moved him, or a sort of defiance, or only an impulse born of his own shaken, weary condition and old Elliot's brandy. But when Redmond Vaughan began to take his leave he interrupted with an abrupt question his promise to come again.

'You know my name—does that tell you anything about me? I see that it does not. Before we meet again, look at the *Guardian* of five months ago, or write to any one you know at either of the Universities, and ask for the story. If, after reading it, you care to come and see me—I—I daresay I shall be very grateful to you. Thanks for your kindness of to-night, at all events.'

Redmond Vaughan smiled a little.

'I will inquire, if you like,' he said. 'But I think I will come and see how you are to-morrow if you will allow me. And now, good-night.'

He bowed, and went away, leaving Arthur all the better for the encounter, in so far that he had a natural subject of reflection to keep his thoughts from the way madness lay.

## CHAPTER V.

### HIS STORY.

REDMOND VAUGHAN, whom Arthur Kenyon could spare time from his own despair to pity, was a young man who had never sought or desired compassion. He took his world as he found it, as those are apt to do who never remember a time when



things were otherwise with them ; and those features which were most harmful and unnatural in it were just those which he took most absolutely for granted.

He had been a mere baby when one moment changed him from as bonny and handsome a boy as any in England to a semi-cripple, an object upon which—as he had been taught to believe—no one would ever willingly look. It had happened very easily, through one moment's inadvertence, as such accidents do, and the thought of the ease with which it might have been prevented had poisoned all his mother's life since.

Mrs. Vaughan was a weak, passionate woman, wrapped up in this only child of hers and specially proud of his beauty, and I have always believed that this blow crazed her ; though her mental weakness did not show itself openly for many years afterwards. Certainly she behaved as injudiciously as possible, even while her husband was alive to restrain her, and after his death she did her best to ruin her son's life.

She did not treat him as Lady Byron treated her splendid, unhappy changeling of fortune, caressing him one day and taunting him with his misfortunes the next. But she never for one hour allowed him to forget it, she deliberately taught him to shrink from every eye, and magnified her own love for him by implying that he could by no possibility be loved by any other.

If Redmond Vaughan had been naturally morbid such treatment would have ended by making him somewhat less than sane. What effect it actually had upon a naturally simple and cheerful disposition we shall see by and by.

One result of it was very obvious. The boy had by nature the love of out-door life, but had been taught that it was disagreeable to others to see him, and ought to be painful to him to be seen. Naturally, therefore, he had shut himself up during the day and had taken long walks when only the owls and the bats were stirring, or when those whom he met could at any rate see nothing that could shock or distress them. By the time he was of age the young man had learned to turn day into night almost completely ; to shrink a little from exposing himself to any eyes, even by artificial light—though for obvious reasons he did not object to that as much as to the light of day—and to spend his nights abroad as regularly as he spent his days in bed or shut up in his own rooms.

He had a strong bent towards natural science, which had happily been encouraged by the tutor who had been provided for him. Redmond owed this tutor to the good sense of his guardian, who unfortunately died before his ward was sixteen, and to the tutor he owed a pursuit that was of the greatest service to him, both in body and mind.

Nature had made him an observer of the ways of bird, beast, and insect, and circumstances gave him the entrée into that very large circle of them which does its business and enjoys its pleasure under cover of night.

Almost imperceptibly, when the time came that study and observation had made his opinion worth having, Redmond found himself in correspondence with scientific journals and with men of science, and as this link with the outside world strengthened he sometimes almost forgot what he ought to have been encouraged always to forget.

For the rest he enjoyed a somewhat doubtful reputation in the neighbourhood. It was evident that a man who never went to church, who spent his nights abroad, and who never met his neighbours socially, *might* be anything but an estimable character ; and his mother had so cut off both of them from the society of the old friends of the family that there were few to vouch for it that the last Redmond Vaughan was, on the whole, neither mad nor bad.

One has speculated sometimes as to what must be a blind man's conception of the outside world, so different from that of another man that neither suspects the gulf that lies between them as they talk—a gulf across which the words that both misunderstand stretch like the two ends of a badly constructed viaduct, that can never meet.

In some respects Redmond Vaughan's material universe differed as widely from that of the rest of us as if he had been born blind. He knew the greyness of the open fields and the deeper dusk of the woods ; he knew every aspect of the nightly heavens and the glories of the dawn ; he knew every creature that loves the night, and those that wake early 'and

' With the sun  
Their daily stage of duty run.'

He dwelt as a matter of course, and with a mind at ease, among aspects of nature that inspire most of us only with a desire to get home and go to bed. He knew the boundaries and contours of his own acres as intimately as the palm of his

own hand, and the signs of the weather and prospects of crops as well as the oldest labourer on the estate. But his knowledge ended where that of other men begins—he had never seen a town, never travelled by rail, never come into personal contact with any except the dozen or so over whom he had absolute influence or control. He read books and newspapers and thought he knew what they meant, while a great deal of their contents was to him like the names of colours to the blind. His intellect might conceive of a crowded noisy world that bought and sold and went to war, that mourned at state funerals and was riotously *en fête* at royal weddings and the like. But his imagination pictured always a world dusky and quiet, with only drowsy cattle stirring in the fields, with Labour thankfully asleep and Pleasure dreaming, and here and there some student awake beside his lamp.

His thoughts, as he went on his way that night after his encounter with Arthur Kenyon, were naturally occupied with his new acquaintance. Strange faces were too rare with Redmond Vaughan not to be remembered; and as he recalled Arthur Kenyon's an ache of unaccustomed pity thrilled through him. His limited book-learned knowledge of the world could not tell him what was written there, but some native perception read and partly interpreted it. He meant to make inquiries, as he had been asked to do, but he could not fancy that the inquiry would elicit any story that involved shameful wrong-doing on the part of this stranger. And Redmond Vaughan in his compassion for the hunger that he had seen in the other man's eyes forgot to think how strange it was that *he* should be contemplating the possibility of making advances to a newcomer.

He had another subject for meditation too, as he went back to the search for certain chrysalids in which he had been interrupted by this episode.

'It was impossible to refuse them,' he repeated to himself more than once. 'It would have seemed as though I was thinking of what they cannot fail to remember—it would have seemed ungenerous. But I wish my dear mother's health would allow her to do more, so that I need not have appeared at all—it would have been more comfortable for all parties. Well, she will be very dull, I suppose—I can fancy the life here must be utterly unlike anything she is accustomed to, and when she can't stand it any longer she will go away.'

It was late in the September afternoon when Vanessa Carroll and her friend looked out of the carriage window and saw the brownish-grey gabled front of Lassington Hall close before them. Neither had been surprised that the carriage met them at the station empty, and the look of the house was not discouraging, for it had a cheerful aspect, and the grounds were well kept, considering how few eyes ever beheld them.

An elderly housekeeper of superior breeding met them in the hall, conducted them to their rooms, which were side by side, and showed them the pretty upstairs sitting-room which they were to consider as their own.

Then, with rather a doubtful look, she asked if they would take tea with Mrs. Vaughan.

'This will be the best time, I think, for you to see her. She does not generally come downstairs or see anybody in the evening, it prevents her from sleeping.'

Shyness was an unknown sensation to Vanessa Carroll, who had always had to play an important part in society and had always had the comfortable consciousness of playing it not amiss.

But she felt a little disconcerted, even a little *eerie*, as Mrs. Vaughan lifted to her face lack-lustre eyes and held out her hand with a vague, kindly smile, but said not a single word.

'This is Miss Carroll, ma'am, who has just arrived,' said the housekeeper, 'and the other young lady is Miss Marlowe.'

'Yes, Welby; yes, I remember. How do you do, my dear? Have you had a long journey to-day?'

With a glance at her friend Vanessa took the chair that the housekeeper offered her and proceeded to make a little history of her journey from India and her stay in London, as she might have done for a child. Mrs. Vaughan listened and asked questions in quite an intelligent manner until she suddenly said—

'And your husband, my dear? Have you left him behind in Calcutta?'

'You mean my father, do you not? Sir Francis is making a grand tour, I tell him he is going to turn explorer in his old age; he is going round the world, you know, and that is how I can be spared to come home to England.'

'I never had the pleasure of meeting your father, my dear. I understood that he died long before you met Sir Francis. Ah! Indian life must be very sad, such constant separations!

Well, I hope the change of air will do you good and that you will like England. I believe Americans generally do.'

'It is rather a strange sensation to be taken for one's own mother!' said Vanessa, as the girls returned to their own quarters; 'it makes me feel like a ghost. But oh! poor woman, I had no idea she was like that. They ought not to have let us come. Her son ought to have had more sense. But I begin to think that perhaps he has as little as she has.'

'Some one in the house is in his or her right wits,' said Winifred shrewdly.

'How do you know that, my wise tutor?'

'By using my eyes, Vane, my dear! We were not in the library more than two minutes when the housekeeper showed us round; but I saw copies of several scientific journals and books, evidently in process of being read, that made my mouth water. The master of the house is a scholar, I believe, whether he is a recluse or not.'

The drawing-room to which Vanessa and Winifred made their way five minutes before the dinner hour was in fashionable half-darkness, with heavy shades upon the two old-fashioned lamps that stood on low tables at either end of the room. A little wood-fire burned in the old-fashioned grate, and beside it stood the tall figure of a young man in evening dress.

He turned, bowed, puzzled the two girls by holding out his left hand, and asked, 'Which is my cousin Vanessa?'

It is likely that Redmond Vaughan's heart was beating a little more quickly than usual. After all he was a man, and a young one; and he had never spoken to a woman of his own class before, except his mother. And to unaccustomed eyes Vanessa Carroll, in her ivory-white evening frock—one of the simplest she possessed—with a ring of moonstones round her slender throat, was a somewhat dazzling spectacle. Dazzling is not quite the right word either, for she reminded Redmond of one of those misty moonlight nights which were to him the loveliest sights the world could offer.

But it seemed to him that there were special reasons why he must not let her feel that her presence was otherwise than matter-of-course and welcome. He hardly knew how far he himself was unlike other people, but he made a strenuous effort to behave as he supposed a friendly relation would under such circumstances.

The dinner-gong sounded before he had ended his inquiries as to their journey and Sir Francis's whereabouts, and he looked at the two ladies in boyish perplexity.

'All this is new to me,' he said. 'I think I ought to take Miss Marlowe, as she is the greatest stranger. Cousin Vanessa, you are at home here while you are in England; you must excuse us if we do not treat you with ceremony.'

Again Vanessa looked at her friend as they sat down to dinner, with eyes that expressed veiled amusement, perplexity, and almost consternation. The young man showed so little sense of the real impossibility of the position; and on the whole, since there was no immediate getting out of it, it was not at all to be desired that he should realise it. And for so many reasons it would not do to betray on their side any perception that the situation was bizarre and strange.

For though the lamps on the dining-table were shaded like the rest, both girls had seen enough to set their pulses tingling with pity and surprise; to put them on their guard with intense and futile anxiety lest word or look should show that they noticed what it was not possible they should avoid noticing.

Fortunately they did not know how few were the feasible topics of conversation. Winifred bethought herself of those scientific journals, and plunged into 'The Inheritance of Acquired Characteristics,' and kindred subjects; and soon the young trio was arguing, discussing and citing authorities with much warmth and mutual satisfaction. Redmond spoke rather slowly, and took Miss Marlowe's utterances more seriously than men usually take the opinions of a young woman, but otherwise he made no sign that this was a unique experience for him. But he seemed exceedingly pleased when Vanessa took his side against her friend, and almost as pleased when Winifred sided with him against Vanessa, and he followed the two girls into the drawing-room to finish the discussion, arming himself with a sheaf of papers from the library with which to overwhelm his opponents.

There was a sort of morning freshness about him—that energetic idleness with which a man lingers in congenial company after breakfast before setting out to begin his day's work.

Presently he announced that he 'supposed he must go out,' wished them good-night, and moved towards the door, then came suddenly back again.

'Cousin Vanessa,' he said somewhat formally, 'I do hope that you will do exactly as you like and give any orders you please while you are here. Some days my mother will be delighted to have your company, and some days she is not so well, and then you and Miss Marlowe will be left, I fear, to entertain each other. I am afraid you will find it very dull ; but I shall be very sorry—more sorry than I can say—if you cannot make yourself happy here for a time, now that your father has trusted you to our care. To-morrow evening you must tell me if there are any arrangements you would like to have made, or any changes that could add to your comfort.'

He went away, with an evident satisfaction at having said the proper thing. Once more the two girls looked at each other.

'That means we shall not see him until dinner-time to-morrow,' said Vanessa. 'What can he do with himself all day ? Win ! this is not a section of real life we are in, it is a fairy tale. One thing is clear, however—that we shall not be able to remain in it.'

The next day, however, Miss Carroll saw some reason to change her opinion. A little before noon she was invited to Mrs Vaughan's room, and found that lady many degrees nearer to the ordinary interests of life than she had been the day before. She was now quite capable of realising Vanessa's relationship to Sir Francis, and even remembered Lady Carroll's maiden name and the year of her death. She talked quite coherently and even pathetically of her own poor health and loneliness ; hoped the girls would not find it too dull, and invited them to drive with her that afternoon, with an evident effort to do what she could for their entertainment.

Vanessa began to think that their presence might do the invalid good, and that Sir Francis, if he knew the state of the case, might, nevertheless, wish them to remain where they were.

She resolved, at any rate, to do nothing in haste, and she and her 'coach' spent a studious morning and a very uneventful afternoon, with an amused sense of waiting for fresh and unexpected developments.

They were not aware that their host had been out all night and in bed most of the day ; but it was distinctly enlivening when he appeared at dinner time with that indefinable morning freshness and energy about him, and inquired as to their

day's doings with all the zest of a man who has got a new species to study.

He asked presently whether the ladies were willing to help to entertain a young—very young parson; and added that he had that day written for one, a nephew of his old tutor, to come for a week or two. 'It will be much less dull for him while he is here if you don't mind seeing a little of him,' added Redmond simply, and proceeded to account for the young man by telling of his meeting with Arthur Kenyon.

'I went to ask after him last night,' he said. 'He says he will be all right in two or three days; but he looks very ill, and I think he is very unhappy.'

'That will be Arthur Kenyon who was Fellow and Tutor of B—— College,' said Winifred Marlowe in almost an awed voice. 'I know him by sight quite well. A pale, slender man, isn't he? with a look of being five times as much alive as most men? I never heard what had become of him. I suppose an innocent man is not so much to be pitied as a guilty one; but I think I am more sorry for him than for any one in the world.'

'You think he is innocent, then?' asked the young man; 'I gather from what he says that there are some who do not.'

'Oh! I know some friends of his very well, and from all I have heard of him I am sure he is incapable of what he is charged with. But he is ruined and disgraced, for all that; and I can well believe that he had a great deal rather he were dead!'

## CHAPTER VI.

### LESLEY.

'Give her time, on grass and sky  
Let her gaze if she be fain;  
As they looked ere he drew nigh  
They will never look again.'

THE story that Arthur Kenyon had heard from Redmond Vaughan was not precisely a pleasant one to haunt a man's imagination through feverish sleep that was all dreaming and waking hours when his thoughts were hardly more under his own control.

But he had learned to be thankful for small mercies; and,



after all, his mind might have been even worse occupied than in picturing over and over again that rude old tragedy, and speculating as to the fate of the family to which it belonged. Visions unpleasantly vivid of those two fierce old men—one lying dead in that very bed upon which Arthur was now lying, the other stark and rigid at the foot of those stairs upon which his feet so often almost stumbled—and a shadowy figure in the doorway, more like the mediæval Devil, than him of modern belief or unbelief, looking upon them both with a face of awful triumph—these came and went; but through them all the marred, beautiful face of the latest Vaughan looked on Arthur with eyes of pity and kindliness—the only eyes whose pity he had found endurable, or whose kindliness had seemed attractive, since the end of the old world and the coming of the chaos.

Arthur had more strength of constitution than his looks gave promise of, and he was not so ill as he deserved to be. He had simply exhausted himself, and had to pay the penalty in two or three days of collapse; but after that he began to recover, and though almost too weak to think or to read he began to feel a spring of reviving interest in people and things, that was a sort of pale, faint shadow of happiness.

The most obvious person to be interested in was Redmond Vaughan, who came to see him several times. Circumstances seemed to force a certain amount of friendliness upon these two, who both in their own way had kindly hearts and quick perceptions. Each was compelled to an extra cordiality by a pity that he must not show otherwise; and when once they had begun to approach there was much to draw them together.

Arthur was too entirely a man of his time not to have given a good deal of thought to natural science; and Redmond was just learning that to talk with a kindred spirit is an even more fascinating mode of treating one's favourite subject than reading or writing about it. He came to see Arthur at first out of kindness; but very soon his visits were at least as much for his own pleasure, and for the first time in his life he felt the impulse towards making a personal friendship.

It did not take long for so keen an observer as Arthur to find out what his new friend's life was like, and how the young man himself regarded it.

Redmond Vaughan seemed to himself to be debarred from ordinary life, as naturally and inevitably as a blind or deaf man is debarred from certain occupations, and he accepted his limitations only too absolutely. Perhaps he was instinctively afraid of awakening yearnings that could never be satisfied. He had his own place in the world ; he could, and did, manage his own estate, and look after the welfare of those dependent on him despotically and benevolently enough. He had his own niche in science, and his own work, which by its peculiar bias rather encouraged him in some of the eccentricities that had grown up with him from his mismanaged childhood.

‘What would be the use,’ he seemed to think, ‘of haunting the outskirts of a world that could never be his? of playing at being like other men?’ And of course he was too absolutely ignorant of other lives to know what it was that he gave up; and too far warped by his mother’s training to judge how far his disabilities were merely fanciful.

The Arthur Kenyon of a year before would never have rested until he had done something to rout his new friend out of whatever was morbid and unnatural in his state of mind, and to restore him to real life; but Arthur Kenyon of nowadays was, not inexcusably, a little morbid himself, or at any rate was by no means sure that that twilight world of few inhabitants in which the other dwelt was not as good as any other.

‘He will never enjoy much, but then he will never suffer keenly,’ thought Arthur. ‘The odds are that he will be better off than the average.’ But he felt a certain tenderness for this young fellow that he had never felt, perhaps, for any one before—certainly not for any of the numerous friends whom he had found in his own world and had left behind when he left it.

His physical collapse naturally brought Arthur into different relations with the women of Cross Rigg Farm. His taciturn hostess had a kindly heart and considerable experience of illness, and her grave, earnest readiness to do everything that was possible for his comfort roused him to gratitude and admiration. Very often her deputy or assistant was her daughter, as grave and as assiduous, and so beautiful that to Arthur’s cultivated taste it was a real pleasure to see her in the room. It was the pleasure with which one studies a picture or a statue. He had

had as yet no means of knowing whether the girl was worthy of her looks, but at least she did and said nothing to contradict the impression they made.

One of Arthur Kenyon's principal charms, when he was in the world, had been his power of saying exactly what he liked without offending or startling any one. Dr. Wendell Holmes remarked long ago upon this faculty possessed by some men. 'It sounds all right *as they say it!*' This power consists quite as much in simplicity as in cleverness, which perhaps is why it cannot be safely imitated. Arthur wanted to know why Lesley Sherwin and her mother had disliked the thought of his arrival, and also why the girl spoke as she did; and he knew that as soon as she became at all friendly he could get to the bottom of both small mysteries simply by asking.

He had never found it hard to talk to people like these. His consciousness of the difference between his position and theirs did not trouble him or spoil his manner; and he was too easily interested to be at a loss for something to say.

Silent as the girl was by habit, she perhaps felt it unkind to be too brief in her replies to an invalid; and gradually, over his inquiries as to events on the farm, and discussions as to his new friends down on the embankment, Arthur taught her to talk to him freely.

She was no marvel of education, in spite of her refined speech. She had been educated, it seemed, just about as much as might have been expected in her position, or perhaps a little more. Arthur wondered whether she had the capacity or the desire for further development, and sometimes thought that she had, but it was hard to say. As to her surface ladyhood, that had come about very naturally. From the old man, Arthur learnt incidentally that his daughter's husband had been a good-for-naught, but come of well-to-do folks; from Mrs. Sherwin he heard that her husband's half-sister, Miss Lesley, had been a good woman, had 'stood godmother' to her brother's child, and had taken charge of her for a good part of her life; and from Lesley herself he gathered that Aunt Deborah had been very well educated, and 'used to think a good deal about things,' and that life in the little quiet cottage where she lived on the outskirts of the small country town had been very different from life at Cross Rigg—not gayer,

perhaps not wider, but possessing a literary element in which the latter was altogether wanting.

Having come so near to confidence, Arthur asked his second question, quite simply, the next time it occurred to him.

‘You were not pleased when your grandfather arranged for me to come here. Why was that?’

The girl put down on the table the tray she had just lifted, and seemed to be considering. She was not shy, though she was so grave and quiet, and Arthur was the more surprised to see a warm blush mount to her cheek before she answered.

‘We had a gentleman lodging here once before; and I—did not like him.’

‘And you thought I should resemble him! Do I?’ said Arthur, smiling.

‘No, not at all.’

If it had been possible to imagine this sedate, beautiful creature coquettish or embarrassed, Arthur might have realised that this kind of conversation was unwise. As it was, he was chiefly aware that she was only a tall child, and that it was interesting to know her untutored thoughts.

‘But you knew that all men were not alike?’ he went on.

‘Aunt Deborah said they were—at least all gentlemen. She said that they would all want to talk in that way—to say foolish things that were not true, and that young women could not be too much upon their guard. And it was so in the books that she gave me to read. But I did not see why I should always have to be on my guard, here in my own home; and at last I said I would not wait on Mr. Ledbury any longer, and mother said I need not. And then he gave notice and left, and grandfather was very angry.’

She took up her tray again and went away; and Arthur did not need further words to tell him in what way Mr. Ledbury had offended. He wondered whether the fellow was still in the neighbourhood, and whether he had ever been kicked as he deserved; and then smiled and told himself that a girl in Lesley Sherwin’s position would probably have many such experiences, and would learn

how to deal with them—though real beauty in that walk of life is less perilous than a pretty face and a taking manner. But the common sense of these reflections went somewhat against the grain, for his thirty years had left him still capable of much reverence for womanhood, and he would have had every woman shielded from what his sister-in-law would have called ‘unpleasantness’—little as some of them would have thanked him for it. And the peculiarity of this girl’s position—perhaps also her beauty—gave interest to speculations as to her character. Had she force enough to rise above her surroundings, or was it desirable that she should so rise? Her mother seemed to have had the opportunity, and to have remained, after all that she had gone through, a mere silent, patient working woman, neither happy nor unhappy, with few feelings and still fewer thoughts. Would the daughter end like that, in spite of the soul and fire that seemed to lie in the depths of those dark eyes of hers?

‘Miss Lesley,’ said Arthur one night, ‘what is the story about that little room and the staircase between it and the bedroom?’

Her eyes flashed wide, and she glanced at the small panelled doorway.

‘You have heard surely about old Squire Vaughan that died in that room yonder—and his brother——?’

‘Yes. But men have died in most old rooms, and accidents have happened in many places.’

‘But—it was not like an accident. The old Squire wished that the devil would come and take his brother.’

‘And the devil came? From what your grandfather said I understand that people think he has been there ever since. Is that *your* belief?’

‘You are laughing at me, Mr. Kenyon,’ she said, and smiled sedately; but her eyes looked grave.

‘No! indeed I am not. I know that place is not quite the same to you as any other, and I really want to know why.’

‘If you went to Sinai, Mr. Kenyon, and found the very actual spot where the Burning Bush was, would it be the same to you as any other place?’

Arthur hesitated a moment. To a mind so trained to be critical as his it was hardly possible to conceive of

certainly in such a case. He knew that he would have been speculating as to the geography of 'the backside of the desert,' instead of realising the Presence that once was there; but he hardly knew how to confess it to this girl.

'I see what you mean,' he said. 'The devil has his temples as well as God, and you think that that is one of them. But if places become sacred to him, so to speak, by the wickedness done in them, I fear many places have a stronger claim than that one.'

'I don't know. I could always fancy I saw those two lying there dead, in the very house they quarrelled about, and *him* between them laughing at them both. If there *are* any worse places, I don't want to know about them.'

Arthur almost started. It was just his own half-feverish vision, and this girl had seen it too—had fancied it first, it seemed.

'Does it frighten you?' he said gently. 'Would you rather never have to pass through that room?'

'No. I was never frightened but once—that time when I slipped and you caught me, and I had not known you were there. Only, somehow, it keeps me from forgetting—and there is such a lot that is bad in the world—I suppose one shouldn't wish to forget.'

It seemed as inappropriate to hear her speak of the wickedness of the world as if she had been a cloistered nun. But after all, though she spoke like a lady, she had hardly been guarded like one—it was possible that she knew what she was talking about.

Arthur seemed to see again that open doorway above his head, and the red light flooding the dark little chamber, and the girl's eyes, full of terror, looking into his.

'I am glad the start I gave you that evening did not make you nervous,' he said half involuntarily.

'Oh no; why should it? I thought there was something bad there, and it was really something good; and I don't think the place has ever seemed quite so dark and bad since.'

The impersonal gravity was like that of a thoughtful child—she seemed to feel it due to Arthur to let him know that after having believed him to be the devil she had found him quite the reverse. And he was too much

of the man of the world either to laugh or to blush, though he felt inclined to do both.

Well, his experience warranted him in having confidence in his own principle and self-control ; but it did just flash upon him that if he had been another man, and under totally different conditions, it might very well have been the Author of Evil who had flung this beautiful creature literally into his arms.

Arthur would no doubt have rushed back to his work long before he was fit for it, but for Redmond Vaughan's prompt action in securing his tutor's young nephew for a fortnight, and sending him up, immediately on his arrival, for orders. The Rev. Thomas Egerton was a nice boy, so simple and boyish that it was impossible to guess whether he knew or remembered the circumstances of the man to whom he was speaking.

He seemed merely anxious to do what Arthur wished, and it would have been ungrateful to him and to Mr. Vaughan to insist on superseding him before his visit was over.

So Arthur had more leisure than he bargained for, and did not find it so unendurable as he would have expected beforehand. Redmond Vaughan offered books, and he plunged eagerly into the study of some points on which they disagreed, as to the development of certain species. And there was another species which could be studied at first hand even while he was laid up—a class of the elder of the boys among the navy children, whom he had bewitched exactly as he used to bewitch some of the undergraduates, who willingly came to see him in the evenings as soon as he was able to talk to them, and who favoured him with the strangest confidences, and bore the queerest nicknames.

As for Lesley Sherwin, why should he not study her as well as 'Punch,' 'Slumpy,' 'The Nipper' and Co.? He was no boy, to fall in love with a lovely face; neither, he trusted, was he such a knave or fool that he could not take care for the girl—the child rather—as though she had been his own sister.

So the fortnight passed away, and its seemingly uneventful days were not weary, though longer than uneventful days have any right to be.

The habit of nightly rambles having been broken through, and Arthur having for once gone early to bed, he awoke early on a fine autumnal morning, and thought he would see what the world looked like before any one was stirring.

He had not reckoned upon farmhouse ways, for he found to his surprise the doors already open, and Gideon Elliot in the farmyard.

Nodding his morning greeting, Arthur passed on and took the green, stony lane that led down into the pasture fields. Far down its windings he could see the cows moving in their leisurely fashion, and following them Lesley's slender figure, clad in russet, like a maiden in an old ballad.

Arthur did not quicken his steps to overtake her, reflecting perhaps that he must meet her coming back. A turn in the narrow trackway hid her from him for a few moments, for the tangled hedges were high and thick, and when he next caught sight of her she was not alone.

She was standing by the gate through which the cows had just passed, with her hand upon it, and beside her stood a young man in rough, earth-stained clothes—the clothes of an ordinary labourer.

But something in his figure and carriage made the clothes look unusual, almost like a disguise, and a second glance at him made Arthur start. Surely, though the young man's back was towards him, he knew that figure and those close-cut waves of dark-brown hair? And, as he looked, the man slightly turned his head. It was Redmond Vaughan's profile, that fine outline which was so pathetic to one who knew what a wreck a further glance must reveal.

Neither Lesley nor her companion had seen him, Arthur knew; and he turned softly on his heel and went away—the beauty of the October sunlight having suffered a sudden eclipse.

Of course the young Squire of Lassington had a perfect right to walk over his own land at any hour he pleased, and if he met the granddaughter of one of his tenants why should he not stop to speak to her?

But why should he be disguised as a workman; and why should it be understood that he shunned daylight and the face of a man if he could be there, at this hour of the morning, talking to a girl *en plein jour*?

It seemed to Arthur that he knew only too well what to



think of it, and it outraged all that he had begun to believe of these two who had done him the inestimable service of interesting him.

*'Till now that we end,'* Redmond Vaughan had said, speaking of his own family, and on coming to know him Arthur had thought he knew what he had meant—that woman's love was amongst the things that were not for him, and that he was too proud to take less from any woman.

That might or might not be; but then what was he doing, in a mean disguise, talking alone to Lesley Sherwin? And she—she must know him! And though she might well love him in spite of his disadvantages—or even for them—she must know that he had no right to approach her so.

*'He could please himself,'* thought Arthur bitterly. *'If he really believes himself to be cut off from the world he is all the more free to marry her if he chooses. But if he meant well, he wouldn't go about it like this!'*

It might, of course, have occurred to Arthur that the other's disguise had been assumed for reasons that had nothing to do with Lesley, and that his meeting with her had been accidental. But he did not think so, and indeed it had been obvious that the two by the gate were talking very earnestly, and had met not for the first time.

He forgot to ask himself what business it was of his, having indeed been all his life accustomed to make anything that happened to interest him his business. But he felt as though a misfortune had happened to him, and his usual impulse to *'do something'* was hampered with innumerable difficulties.

What indeed could any one do in such a case? Little enough, as his experience at the University had taught him. If Arthur thought fit to betray what accident had brought to his knowledge, was it likely that either mother or grandfather could tell the girl more than she knew already, or guard her against her will? And as for Redmond Vaughan, Arthur had read him in one respect like a book—had seen that he was not easy to advise and impossible to control. Fate might have circumscribed his sphere of action, but within it he would most certainly take his own way. Could anything be done by talking to Lesley herself?—but when Lesley came in with his breakfast Arthur's audacity failed him, for the first time in his life, and he felt that his paternal interest in her would not carry him to the length of mentioning such a subject to her at

present,—sooner than that he would doubt the sight of his own eyes, and wait for further evidence.

But it was with a very disturbed mind that he went to visit his sick among the navvy huts, and to superintend the erection of his iron building, and to chat with the men on the embankment, and he wondered whether the ordinary parish priest, he who was to the manner born, often had to carry such distracting thoughts about with him. Certainly no Manual that he had yet come across made mention of them, or gave advice as to what to do in such cases.

At night, after an evening class which he had persuaded some of the men to attend, and at which he patiently instructed them in the rudiments of reading and writing, Arthur strolled down towards Lassington, hoping to meet Redmond Vaughan, and perhaps find an opportunity of speaking to him.

He was found in a belt of woodland at the edge of the park, hunting some nocturnal beetles, and very full of a scientific question that 'Miss Marlowe' had raised that evening, and Arthur did not after all mention Lesley Sherwin.

'I must be losing my nerve,' he thought. 'I, who have acted mentor to dozens of young fellows of his age and double his knowledge of the world! If he were to lie to me, or to take it amiss, or to show himself a villain, I simply could not stand it just now! And could a man who was going to the devil for a woman be so keen after a *Strangalia armata*?'

The next day, in the light of a stormy sunset, Arthur was coming up the road towards Cross Rigg when at the farmyard gate he again caught sight of that not-to-be-forgotten figure, dressed just as the day before, the rough corduroy, rubbed and brown with the marks of the soil, moulding itself to the fine lines of Redmond Vaughan's broad shoulders and well-developed limbs.

Lesley was there too, standing just inside the gate and leaning upon it, and her face, which was turned towards Arthur, was grave and thoughtful as usual.

His way to the front of the house lay through a doorway in the high stone wall at the end—he was ashamed to turn in through the farmyard, though he might have done so at another time. Lesley neither started at the sight of him or moved away. She said something inaudible, and her companion turned leisurely round.

It was Arthur who started ; for this was and was not the young owner of Lassington. The face was the same, the clear-cut features, the fine dark eyes, but the terrible scar was gone ! This was Redmond Vaughan, surely, as he would be in 'the day of restitution of all things.'

And yet not quite that either, one could hope ; for the face was very sad—sadder, in spite of its unmarred beauty, than the face of the real Redmond ; the eyes gloomy and restless, the lips set in a curve that was not joyous even now while they smiled.

Arthur became aware that he was staring in an absolutely unjustifiable manner, and he lifted his hat to Lesley and passed on into the house, lost in wonder.

*(To be continued.)*

## *FROM MY ATTIC WINDOW.*

---

**The Success of Christmas as an Institution.** When all is said by the hypercultured and dyspeptic—poor things, poor silly things—I suppose it may be taken for granted that Christmas as a social institution is a success. Of course for those who have to pretend to be merry while they are suffering from a guilty conscience the whole thing is a ghastly failure. But for just ordinary everyday people who jog along the whole year through it is really a welcome break if nothing else. And it always is something else. It is the one time in the year when the nations as a whole seek for happiness along the right lines. Unconsciously, for the most part, we become philosophers who act on the assumption that happiness is the one thing which can never be caught by pursuing it. To find our own happiness we must be looking for the good of others. To be sure this philosophy was taught simply and in easy words by the deepest, highest of philosophers nineteen hundred years ago. But since then this simple teaching has been rediscovered in Germany, and called by several polysyllabic names. So it is quite safe now. And we know we are on the right road to happiness if we seek not our own but the things of others. And this in a feeble, temporary way is what Christmas does for us. We seek to some extent the pleasure, happiness and joy of others, and to just that same extent we find that a merry Christmas is a possibility. The widow in the sadness of memories gives herself up to making the day cheery for the bairns. And lo, it is cheery for herself in a way she hardly thought possible. The man gluttoned with luxury for one brief season puts luxuries in the lap of those who are strange to

them. We all for a week at least consider somebody else, and for that week hear just an echo of the joy of Heaven.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Behind some Scenes.** There are some persons with whom one would like a private half-hour, if in that half-hour they could be induced to doff their war-paint and show their real selves. The late Prince Bismarck was a gentleman with whom one could apparently have been certain of finding diversion ; his most private conversations were sure to be spiced with surprises. The Dowager Empress of China is another individual with whom a conversation, *unter vier augen*, would be highly entertaining. An Empress who, according to report, began life as a slave and a dancing-girl would of itself make an interesting study. But when in addition to this we find a lady to whom *coups d'états* are mere play, who dethrones and murders an Emperor and instates herself as coolly as she would dismiss her scullion, things become really impressive. Here we have an ancient dame in this nineteenth century, belonging to a realm where women are of so little account that a man is insulted if you inquire after the health of his wife, making an upheaval in a phlegmatic empire, keeping the diplomats, peoples, and press of two hemispheres on the *qui vive* in trying to find out and frustrate her tricks. Whatever she may lack of Western education, she must be a lady who knows how to make up her mind, and, having done so, to stop at nothing—murders, revolution, lying—until she has accomplished her purpose. She is a clever, strong character, who, if her face had been set in the other direction, could have changed the character and geography of Eastern Asia. As it is, she is bitterly opposed to all reforms (despite the official communication to the Chinese Legation), and especially bitter if the reforms come from England. The reformer Kang, who has succeeded in escaping to an English warship, was the founder of a society which the Empress particularly resented. It is called the Pon-Tsan-Tson-Lui (a convenient little title), and has or had—for we do not know how things are now in that topsyturvy empire—for object the prevention of foot-binding. The society had 10,000 members at the start, and each took an oath not to allow her daughters to bind their feet and not to give her sons in marriage to young ladies who were so deformed. Kang, it seems, had a daughter who felt very strongly on the subject, and wrote a pamphlet (not a novel with a purpose this

time) to prove its absurdity. Foot-binding was on its way to extinction. Probably this wily old Empress, who has come forward 'to advise and protect the Emperor,' will bring it to a sure and certain resurrection.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The place of Athletics in Girls' Lives.** A discussion has been carried on in the *Outlook* on the place of sports and athletics generally in the modern education of girls. It is a question which sooner or later will have to be grappled with. Fifty years ago we were at one end of the swing of the pendulum. To-day we are at the other. Is the other the right end? There are opinions worth considering on both sides. One High School mistress contends that all the pushing, jostling, and rough play in the field is bound to affect girls' manners in the drawing-room, and she complains that their eagerness for sport, besides straining their physical powers, prevents them from giving their minds to intellectual reading. And in support of that I cannot help remembering the women I have met who were mere animals, whose conversation was of horse-racing, otter-hunting, ferrets, dogs, and championships. They did no reading, they did no thinking; they ate and drank and slept, and obviously associated with stable-boys. These women presumably were girls once. Were they the girls who were demoralised by their sports into imagining life was one long vista of games, the examples of a good plant run riot until it became as worthless as a weed?

But the other side, the *pro* side, has after all the heaviest weight of evidence. As another High School mistress says: 'Girls are far better employed in good healthy games than in "loafing" about with other girls' brothers and cousins; their physique is considerably benefited by athletic exercises; and as to reading, nine out of ten girls of the present day, even with their improved education, are by nature no more intellectual than their grandmothers, and the tenth—the intellectual girl—can be quite safely trusted to take care of her own reading.'

While yet another assistant mistress remarks, 'Health, endurance, self-reliance, and good temper are gained on the hockey field. There are other lessons to be learned than those conned in books, and a strong body is, if not more important, at any rate more useful than a deeply stored mind.' And again: 'A good digestion and an active liver are more useful in the battle

of life than a knowledge of advanced mathematics, and sturdy limbs and strong hands of more value to the mother than decimal fractions and a familiarity with irregular verbs.'

In athletics, as in nearly every other question which ever comes into practical everyday life for decision, the happy compromise, the golden mean is the best and safest solution. There are just a few things—holiness, justice married with mercy, love—which will stand being carried to their furthest limits. But in other decisions 'a wise man knows to find the way of wisdom by going neither to the left nor the right, but between them both.'

\* \* \* \* \*

**Hero Worship** We first catch our hero—or make one—then we  
**and some** worship him. At least those of us who have even  
**Heroes.** the remotest claim to be called men and women do. And as for boys and girls, they are prepared to fall down and worship a stone or the handiest wooden block, pre-supposed to be human, sooner than not worship at all. It is one of the saving claims in the meagre charter of human nature that we are willing—more, we are eager—to bow to the greatest, kneel to the prettiest, and kiss the one we love the best from the days when we played forfeits until we go where standards of greatness are changed. To be sure we have odd methods as a nation of honouring our heroes. Some we bring home from the malarial East and feed and feed and feed again to the accompaniment of a toast list, and when they stray about the streets we make their lives a burden by following them in cheering crowds till privacy is the gift they crave from the gods. Then having done our best to ruin their digestive systems, we are content, for we have honoured our great. And doubtless they enjoy it, though under protest.

To others of our heroes we give nothing but a grave. While they live we take their greatness for granted, until some break or some crisis shows us what they have been all the time. To many we have denied even that, and only when Time has turned his searchlight on their lives or work have we recognised with a start that our heroes have walked about amongst us and we believed them common men.

There is still another class of heroes, which class indeed made me start on this hero worship tack, whose deeds of courage, acts of heroism are mentioned in despatches from their superior officers, chronicled in short newspaper para-

graphs, and then the memory of them is snuffed out like a dying candle. These heroes in humble life did their brave deeds quietly, without thought of risk or hope of reward. Generally their reward was death. Them we cannot reward. But an attempt is about to be made to keep their names alive.

The idea of doing this started with Mr. G. F. Watts, the Royal Academician. It is a simple beautiful little attempt to do a fragment of work that wants doing. It made the world seem a more beautiful place to me when I heard of it. Mr. Watts himself explains it—

‘The heroic deeds that are constantly coming before the public eye,’ he said, ‘implying the sacrifice of life to save others, seem to me to constitute a grand and honourable feature of the national character. It is a great pity that they should only receive the recognition of a newspaper paragraph, and be forgotten next day. What I want is to establish a permanent memorial of them, which all who go by may read.’

‘A chance has now risen for at least making a commencement. Mr. Gamble, the incumbent of St. Botolph’s, has given me an opportunity of starting the memorial in his churchyard. My idea is to make a covered way round three sides of the quadrangle, supporting the shelter on columns, or timber if stone is too expensive. It will be a sort of cloister, if that is not too ambitious a word. The memorial tablets will be placed on the wall, recording the brave deeds of the miner, the fireman, the life-boatman, the policeman, the engine-driver, the labourer, and the domestic servant.’

‘Every week some brave deed is done—and forgotten. It should not be forgotten. Such deeds as that of Alice Ayres, the servant-girl, who saved three children from a fire at the sacrifice of her own life, deserve to be handed down to posterity. I intend to make a record of such deeds for the period of the Queen’s reign. A lady has undertaken to look up the cases for me in the files at the British Museum, and the memorials will be so simple that there will be no difficulty in recording them all—as simple as the impulse which led to the deed. No busts, no pictures—merely a tablet recording the date, the name, and the event.’

This idea has lain in Mr. Watts’ mind for years, and even before he began to work at it himself it bore fruit. For he let drop the suggestion into fertile soil, and Mr. Walter Crane, an artist whose style is remotely related to Mr. Watts’, took it up, and in the Red Cross Hall at Southwark something of the kind is being done; some of a series of panels painted to illustrate deeds of greatness by heroes and heroines in humble life have been put in position, and so far as they go are a memorial to the forgotten brave. But to paint a panel for each of our humble heroes would be giant’s task and need a world to hold them. The humbler scheme will more effectively reach its end.



**Nameless.** A short paragraph met my eye a few days ago. It recorded the fact that a Vicar Apostolic of the Sahara and Soudan had been appointed and had left Marseilles on a certain steamship accompanied by twelve monks and eight nuns. Apart from the idea that the Sahara as a parish hardly suggested a fruitful field, there was nothing very striking about the information. I suppose similar departures take place every few months, if not oftener. But suddenly the pathos of the thing struck me. Here were this dozen of men and those eight women going out to live for the remainder of their lives in the centre of Africa—nameless. A dozen of monks, and eight nuns, that was all. Yet they were somebody's children once. Maybe they were, some of them, somebody's lovers. And now their names are recorded in some Catholic church and convent records, but for the rest they are lost. They will go out there and some will die and some will live. But who will know? To part with one's identities has somehow a pathos of its own. To lose even one's name, which is the one legacy every one receives from one's parents, is the last thing, except death, one can give up.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Functions of the Poet.** At last the long talked-of memorial to Christina Rossetti is finished. It consists of a carved reredos placed in the church in Woburn Square in which she used to worship. As a national memorial of a poetess it seems hardly adequate. A very small proportion of even those who know and appreciate the subtle beauty of her poetry are likely to penetrate to the inner recesses of Woburn Square Church to examine the reredos. Still, from the vicar's and congregation's point of view it is eminently successful, as it is from an artistic point of view. For Miss Rossetti's friend from girlhood's days, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, has painted the panels in his most characteristic style. There was a dedicatory service in the afternoon of All Saints' Day, when the Bishop of Durham gave an address on poets and poetry. He took no text but said a good many things worth remembering. As, for instance, that wonder is the very foundation of poetry. The true poet is amazed when he looks and finds the eternal and the infinite in common things, and he leads his fellow-men to look upon them in that light. It is strange that in classical times few women (to whom the devotion of wonder is natural)

became known as poets. Doubtless many did the poet's work in silence, one or two gained a name in Greece and one at least in Rome, and to the scanty relics of their work must be added two or three great songs of thanksgiving in the Bible. But in our own century not a few women have delivered their message as poets. In these days we stand in greater need than ever of poets who see to the heart of things and who seek for the fellowship of light between the seen and the unseen. To these and other things which will bear pondering Dr. Westcott passed to considering more in detail Miss Rossetti's particular distinction, which was, and is, and will be, that she was pre-eminently the spiritual poet. For this reason, as well as for some others, she will never be the poet of the many. But she is the beloved of the few.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Empire Making.** Now we know how it is done. It seems very simple. Required, a ship, preferably a cruiser, and a supply of Union Jacks. Method : Choose a neighbourhood as far from civilisation as convenient for your purpose—islands are best. Send a squad of men armed with a pole and a flag to the island selected. Let them plant the pole and run the flag up on any convenient spot and lo, the Empire who owns the flag has annexed the island. In this simple and beautiful way did our Fatherland annex fourteen islands in the South Pacific this summer. A vessel belonging to the Australian station set out from Sydney in April and returned a few months later having acquired a group of islands lying four or five hundred miles east of the Solomans, all being the homes of cannibals. They all have fearful and wonderful names, and it is a matter for rejoicing to me that I am not in my school days wrestling with the lists of British possessions. As I read it it sounded so beautifully simple a method that I felt impelled to go out on my own account and annex a continent or two. But I am such a bad sailor I desisted.

However, I feel in honour bound to my native land to report that immediately after annexation courts of law were established, impromptu courts on a beach, and justice for the oppressed was meted out. At Vella la Vella, for instance, a notable character, Belungi, was charged with head-hunting, and from the evidence it appeared that after running round some time in search of a white head (they prefer the European) he came up with a canoe laden with eight young native women,

who were out for pleasure. He shot six and took two with him. The charge being proved, Belungi was given until the rising of the court for the production of the two missing girls. These he refused to hand over, so was taken a prisoner to New Guinea.

Some of these new British subjects are very creditable to the Crown. In Tocupia, for instance, the men are gigantic in stature. One who was measured was 6ft. 10ins. And the women are proportionate. Men there wear their hair long and flowing. The women have theirs cut short. Even there the crude belief in immortality is evident. No one ever marries a second time, for it is known that the spirit of the deceased has gone on ahead and is waiting for the other half.

Among other things and places that cruiser annexed a volcano. A handy possession that, one which no Empire should be without. I could name several persons who might with advantage be sent to colonise it.

ANNIE GROSER HURD.

## The China Cupboard.

ARRANGED BY CHELSEA CHINA.

---

(For the regulations of all 'Monthly Packet' competitions, see p. 718.)

---

### FIRST SHELF.

Is it really time to write a Christmas greeting? The long, long summer is hardly over—Christmas in the December number is quite premature. We must put off our good wishes for January. The clocks by which magazines regulate their movements are always rather fast, we have to take time by the forelock. It is, therefore, time to think of Christmas festivities and Christmas prizes. As to the latter we give some hints, as usual, in our pages; as to the former, we suggest that an excellent list of possible plays and recitations is to be found in the G. F. S. Book List, to be obtained of Messrs. Wells Gardner & Darton, for twopence.

---

A correspondent asks us to have a discussion on French Cookery for our Variety Subject. Chelsea China does not quite see how to 'discuss' the dishes unless they were before us on the table! And she does not think giving recipes is exactly the vocation of THE MONTHLY PACKET. Such various and no doubt excellent ones can be obtained in scores of penny magazines, to say nothing of those in the Society papers, that she does not feel as if we were called upon to enter into competition with them. Cookery is not only a useful but a most *amusing* art, and it is an excellent thing for the present generation that it has become so fashionable. Forty years ago or so, when our good old PACKET was young, it was not usual for young ladies to be so domestic.

---

Talking of our early days, we have further on a little notice which will recall them to our older readers. Miss Yonge has sent us a short account of the fiftieth anniversary of the consecration of Hursley Church. Some can recall, and many of us have been told all our lives, how much interest Mr. Keble took in our first blue numbers. They owed much to his influence and encouragement, and we think it may be said that they have done their share in setting forward the principles that were so dear to him.

---

### VARIETY SUBJECT.

#### 'The Life History of a Dragonfly.'

We have got some charming histories of dragonflies. Chelsea China would like to print them all. Between four of them she finds it most difficult to decide—*Winifred Spurling*, *Mesech*, *Kappa Pi*, and *Triangle* have done it so well in different ways. Perhaps *Triangle* gives us the most scientific information. *Mesech's* is a most amusing bit of writing, and the others

combine both characteristics. *Kappa Pi's* is perhaps rather the fullest, so she takes the prize. *Ruby, Mabel, Thames Valley, Fa-ik, M. G., and Dinah Doe* have all sent good papers. Chelsea China is always glad when the natural history subjects prosper. She apologises for the omission last month of *Lily Lambert's* name and address. It is Miss Margaret Talbot, Falconhurst, Edenbridge.

Lady Sybil Cuffe has sent us too late for competition so excellently written a paper on *Helbeck of Bannisdale* from a point of view not often represented in so liberal a spirit, that we hope to find space for it this month or next.

### THE LIFE HISTORY OF A DRAGONFLY.

"I want to split. I am sure I shall split. I will split."

'Tragic words these! No wonder Tom of the "Water Babies" who heard them uttered wanted to know the reason why. "Because," said the dragonfly larva, "my brothers and sisters have all split and turned into beautiful creatures with wings, and I want to split too."

Thus Charles Kingsley in his account of the critical passage in a dragonfly's life. The story, though told with a charming play of poetic fancy, is not one whit the less true, but it leaves room both before and after for fuller, if duller, details, and for these we must descend to prose.

A dragonfly is not the butterfly-natured being of a summer's day that we might suppose him to be when we see him as he flits, his wings lit with all the colours of the rainbow, to and fro over a pond, so quickly sometimes that he seems no more than a flash of blue and purple. Alas! this vision is not all that is beautiful. He is carnivorous—gnats, moths, and butterflies fall victims to his powerful jaws; nay, more, he preys upon his weaker brethren; he is a veritable monster of cruelty; he is a terror to the neighbourhood and little deserves the pretty name bestowed on him (or should we say her) by the French—*La Demoiselle*.

In common with that of all the Insecta, the life history of our dragonfly is a complicated one. He undergoes what is known as an Incomplete Metamorphosis. This has an unsatisfactory sound, but no doubt it is an eminently satisfactory state of things to the insect himself, for instead of being obliged to retire into private life (with a strait waistcoat) before emerging as a perfect insect, he remains at large and is able to continue his hunting excursions up to almost the last moment of his pupal life.

Like all respectable individuals, he has a pedigree. He belongs to the order Neuroptera, so named from the characteristic feature—the extremely fine network of nervures which support the wings. His family is known as the Libellulidæ, and is composed of some 1,500 distinct species, over fifty of which are natives of Great Britain.

The lady dragonfly deposits her eggs beneath the surface of the water, attaching them to the stem of a water plant. She sometimes descends to considerable depths for the purpose.

When hatched, the larva is flattish in form and hexapod, and in spite of several differences bears a resemblance to his parents.

The compound eyes, which in the perfect insect are very large, with from 10,000 to 12,000 facets in each, are not fully developed, and the ocelli or simple eyes are wanting. The mouth shows peculiar modifications of the form typical to the order; it is a powerful masticatory apparatus and consists of an elongated appendage, flat with a joint in the middle and a pair of strong pincers at the end, adapted for seizing insects and even small fish. When at rest it folds up over the face like a mask. Kingsley describes it as being like a donkey's face.

The body is thick and clumsy and brown in colour, a strong contrast to the slender many-hued 'tail' of the dragonfly proper. It is terminated by

five membranous appendages of unequal size, and so arranged as to form a pyramidal tail. The larva breathes through this tail by separating the five parts so as to open a valve, and drawing in a quantity of water into its body.

The water traverses the whole tracheal system, and when deprived of its oxygen is discharged with so much force that the larva is propelled forward. (A breathing apparatus which thus adds to the powers of locomotion must be decidedly advantageous.)

The larva takes from ten to eleven months to attain his full size, and when he grows too big for his skin, he moults. This he does two or three times, and spends his days between whiles in having a good time, hunting and killing small fish and insects of all kinds, and growing fat upon such dainties. After his last moult he arrives at the pupa stage, and his wing cases become detached from each other and show traces of the mesh-like appearance of the wings beneath. The critical moment now comes, a dull morning may postpone it, but a sunny morning will tempt him to climb up the stem of a water plant above the surface, and there attach himself firmly. By a supreme effort he cracks open the skin of his head and back, and gradually disengages himself from it, and then remains a considerable time with his head thrown completely backwards and his abdomen still within the pupa skin.

Another effort and he assumes an erect position, and walks out of the shackles of his larval life. As if exhausted, the new-made dragonfly rests awhile, and a great change comes over him whilst the sun is shining upon him. His wings, which were at first much contracted, limp and useless-looking, spread out to their full size and assume their colours, his compound eyes grow larger, and three ocelli appear at the top of his head. The 'donkey face' has given place to jaws of less remarkable appearance, but of equally powerful nature, and the tail, with the breathing apparatus, has disappeared in favour of the less visible form common to most insects—that of spiracles or breathing pores at each side of the body.

And so it comes to pass that our dragonfly is equipped for his life above the water; the length of his life has not been ascertained, it is probably of several weeks' duration. We will take leave of him as he prepares for his first flight, his first hunting excursion, in which he carries on the same scenes of murder and rapine as he did in his life under the water.  
—KAPPA PI.

---

#### THE LIFE HISTORY OF A DRAGONFLY.

The life history of a dragonfly falls into the same cycle as that of nearly all other insects—egg, larva, pupa, or chrysalis, and imago, or perfect insect.

First the eggs: these are laid by the female in the water, into which she intrudes the extremity of her abdomen, so as to attach them to the stalks of plants, sometimes even descending to a considerable depth beneath the surface. The eggs are attached loosely in bunches. On the hatching of these eggs the larvæ appear, live in the water, and begin their rapacious habits even at this early stage, and devour and eat everything that comes in their way. In this stage the body is more or less elongated, the head large, with the compound eyes of a moderate size, while the simple eyes are wanting.

The antennæ are seven-jointed. The complicated mouth organs are very like those of the perfect insect, except the lower lip, which is formed into a remarkable mask-like appendage, which quite shuts up the mouth when not being used. This mask is a complex organ, made up of many pieces, two of which are toothed; the larva has the power of opening or closing all these parts with the greatest facility. The use of this curious

arrangement is to seize its prey, which consists of other aquatic insects and even small fish.

The respiration of these aquatic larvæ is very singular. It is carried on by leaf-like appendages proceeding from the tail. When they are opened a small valve allows the water to enter into the body; when they are closed the creature absorbs the oxygen from the water by marvellously beautiful internal organs connected with the tracheæ; the deoxygenated water is expelled from the body by another internal organ; this expulsion has the effect of propelling the larva for a few inches.

The next stage is the pupa or chrysalis, where it remains for some ten or eleven months, the skin being cast several times, traces of the wings are observable, and at last the pupa creeps up some aquatic plant or a stone, to which it attaches itself by its tail, the skin of the thorax slits down the back, and the pupa, after some two hours of wriggling and throwing itself backwards and forwards, emerges a perfect dragonfly. The wings dry and assume their full size, and the creature is an aerial insect. This is the imago or perfect state. The body is divided very clearly into the three regions—head, thorax, and abdomen. The head is large, and bears immense compound eyes uniting on the top of the head, with about 10,000 facets in each, and three ocelli or simple eyes; the antennæ are short and slender, with five or eight joints. The mouth parts are powerful and well developed, there is a large upper lip or labium, the maxillæ are lobe-shaped, and the palpi are single jointed; the labium is partially attached to the palpi.

The thorax is somewhat thick, to it are attached the three pairs of legs and the two pairs of transparent membranous wings filled with nervures.

The abdomen is much elongated, narrow and nearly linear, and composed of ten joints. They belong to the order Neuroptera, from the Greek *neuron* = a nerve, and *pteron* = a wing; family Libellulidæ; they may again be divided roughly into slender and thick-bodied. About 1,500 species have been described, and of these fifty inhabit our own country.

Dragonflies are terrible foes to other insects, devouring whole hosts of butterflies, mayflies, &c. They are very beautiful, elegant, and graceful insects, with powerful flight and carnivorous habits, and are among the largest insects found in our country.

Much more might be written about these deeply interesting creatures, but let us hope enough has been said to prove the truth of what Robert Boyle wrote long ago: 'Nothing can be unworthy of being investigated by man which was thought worthy of being created by God.—TRIANGLE.

#### THE LIFE HISTORY OF A DRAGONFLY.

'To-day I saw the dragonfly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.

An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk; from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

He dried his wings; like gauze they grew;  
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew.'

The larva emerged from the egg in the shallow basin of a fountain in a small rockery.

It breathed through its tail, and by turns opening and shutting five valves in its body it moved with quick jerks through the water in the search of food.

It was able to lift that part of its face called 'the mask' and to project it forwards to seize its victim.

It had to be content with worms and water insects, as there were no small fish.

Its appetite was enormous ; it frequently changed its skin as it grew from larva to nymph.

After two years of sub-aquatic life, the full-grown nymph crawled forth from the water up the frond of an osmunda fern.

About half-way up it stopped and remained motionless as though it were glued to the plant.

It was a queer, dried-up looking object, like a mummified grasshopper.

Presently part of its back slit lengthwise, and through the rent the head and upper half of the imago or perfect insect appeared and fell limply forwards.

Then twisting round and clinging to the case with its six legs, it managed to drag out its tail. Although free from its prison the dragonfly still held to the fern-frond, for its wings were flabby and wet, and it was weak from its exertions. But as it rested its wings gradually hardened and extended themselves, and the dragonfly was able to fly.

Now indeed it (or rather he, for in a few days the yellow bloom on its body changing to blue proclaimed the dragonfly to be of the male sex) was a beautiful creature.

His four clear white wings were iridescent in the sunshine, large glorious eyes jewelled his small head ; nothing escaped his vision, so he might have derived his name from '*δράκων*' ('sharp-sighted'). His real name was *Libellula depressa*, and being gracefully slender the nickname 'démouille' suited him well. His long lower lip shooting forth after flies, looked so like a sting that it explained how his species in other parts of the world have gained the names of 'the devil's darning-needle,' or 'horse-stinger.'

Life has compensation for insects as well as for man, and the dragonfly in a suburban garden, though he misses the fair heritage of his kind emerging in the midst of river plants and rushes, has a richer feast of spiders and flies. For a spell of summer days he was filled with the joy of living and killing.

He made an appreciable difference in the swarms of gnats dancing round the fountain. Sometimes he seemed playing a game of French blind man's buff as he darted over the rockery, from white phlox to willow-herb, from willow-herb to jessamine ; for he had the power of moving backwards, thus pressing his prey into a corner.

He was for ever mateless, as his life came to an abrupt and retributive end.

He did not fall a victim to the man of science, or a zealous collector : there is no stiffened colour-faded mummy of him in a glass case. He, the devourer of thousands, was snapped up by an 'unconsidered trifle' in the form of a plump robin redbreast, who was suddenly moved thereto by a feeling of jealousy, hunger, or wanton mischief.

Gnats still danced, the phlox and jessamine smelt sweet as ever, but with the death of the dragonfly some of the brightness went from the garden.—WINIFRED SPURLING.

---

#### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A DRAGONFLY.

The first thing I can remember is feeling dreadfully hungry. I was hiding behind a piece of weed, being then so very small, and I wondered whether, if I were to venture out in search of a dinner, some one would seize and eat me, for there were other inhabitants of the pond, and most of them were bigger than I was then, and I knew they were all hungry, every one always is in a pond ! How I got into the pond I do not know ; when I look at myself now it seems strange that I could ever have been



what I was then. The only thing about me that has not changed is my appetite. I am still always dreadfully, yes, *dreadfully* hungry !

But to return to the pond. It was a good pond, full of food, though not very large. Now I fly all across and over it quite a hundred times a day, but then I thought it the whole world. I was young and foolish then, but of course I know better now. I had no wings in those days ; I was only a grub, and lived at the bottom of the pond in the mud. I could not even swim very fast, and I found the only way to get a dinner was to hide in a likely spot and wait till something edible about my size came past. Then I shot out my movable face, which ended in a pair of nippers, and—well, that thing did not often escape me !

Very few things were bad to eat then, not like those nasty little flies I sometimes catch now, and which are all hollow inside. Regular frauds I call them ! flying about and looking plump and inviting, and when you have made yourself hungrier than ever flying after them, you catch them, and there is not one good mouthful to be got out of them ! Give me a good juicy gnat or a moth !

But it was different in the pond. Somehow I managed to eat without being eaten, and I grew quite fast, and could catch and devour bigger things every day. Tadpoles and young efts were very good ; they were so soft and juicy, and could not bite back ; they were very foolish too, and never understood that I meant to eat them till I had begun to do it. Sometimes, as I grew older, I caught a minnow ; there is a good deal of eating in a minnow, but you cannot often keep it all to yourself ; unless you are pretty big other creatures will join you and share your catch.

In those days I looked quite different to what I do now ; I had no wings, indeed I did not know that there were such things, and had never heard of flying. Nobody flew in the pond. I was dark grey (a very good colour when you want to hide), I had six legs, a face with two very big eyes, and a long body. When I wanted to catch anything I could shoot a long arm, ending in a pair of nippers, out of my face ; but I think I told you that before.

I stayed a long time in the pond, and grew to be one of the most considerable inhabitants. Before I left I could catch and eat nearly everything ; there was only one person of whom I was just a little afraid, the Larva of the Great Water Beetle. He was even bigger than I, and quite as hungry, and his jaws were very sharp. He was always very civil when we happened to meet, which was not oftener than I could help. When two people are both always so hungry it is much wiser for them to keep as far apart as possible.

I suppose it was spring when I first found myself in the pond, but seasons are very much alike if you only spend your time hunting for things to eat. In winter there was not so much food, and I slept a good deal in the mud, and I know there were two winters before I felt I must leave the pond.

It was very curious that I should feel I really *must* leave the pond, and I have been quite able to understand how it came about. All of a sudden I felt so uncomfortable in the water, my skin was too tight, and I could not breathe, and, worst of all, I did not care to eat. This was a pity, as there was an unusually plentiful supply of food that season. Only a few days before I had met the Water Beetle, and we had agreed that the pond was overcrowded, and it would be well to thin out some of the surplus population. He was doing it too ! I could see him from where I lay, and I envied him, but I could not force myself to eat a single mouthful.

At last I could bear it no longer ; out I must go. I crawled slowly up a stem right up out of the water. It looked very strange, but I was quite sure I was going to die, so I just hung on my reed and waited for the end. Suddenly I felt my skin giving way in the middle of my back, and I began to want to get out of it. The more I tried the wider the rent grew, and at last I squeezed myself out of it and hung on my stem above it, feeling too

tired and weak to move another step. I was all soft too, and had two little humps on my back which kept uncreasing and tickled me. After I had rested a little while I began to walk about, and I found the humps were growing so fast I could *feel* them stretch. They were my wings, of course, but I did not understand that then. The sun shone on me and hardened me, and I felt better. Presently I saw I was quite different to what I had been in the pond, much longer and slimmer; my colours had come too; in fact I had changed to what you now see me, beautiful bright blue body and head, with black markings and four splendid strong wings. I felt hungry again, and then I knew I should be all right. I saw gnats in the air, and I stretched my wings and flew after them. It was very strange that I was able to fly all at once, but somehow it seemed just as easy as swimming had been.

I cannot swim now; I know it, because one day a swallow swooped passed me and knocked me into the water, and if it had not been for a bit of floating wood, on to which I climbed, I should have been drowned.

My wife is very like me, except that her colours are green and black. She is extremely busy laying eggs just now, which is why you have not seen her round here catching something. She eats quite as much as I do.

I really cannot stay talking here any longer. I am so hungry, and I have let ever so many gnats go by. Goodbye. I'm off!—*Told by Anax formosus, the Great Dragonfly, to MESECH.*

#### PRIZE WINNER FOR OCTOBER.

Miss Catherine Pedder, 13, Somerset Place, Bath.

#### SUBJECT FOR DECEMBER.

Choose your favourite motto for 1899, and write a short essay upon it.

### SECOND SHELF.

#### CHARACTER STUDY FOR SEPTEMBER.

'He is a character.' 'He has character.' 'He has lost his character.' 'That was good for the child's character.' Discriminate between the uses of the word 'character' in these sentences.

All the papers give the shades of meaning correctly. They are classed according to clearness of definition. *Thames Valley* takes the prize.

The word 'character,' coming from a Greek one which meant 'a mark made by cutting,' 'a peculiar letter or form,' is defined by the dictionary as meaning 'the qualities which distinguish an individual.'

In the sentence 'He is a character' the word is used to imply an individuality which is so marked as to be peculiar, perhaps even absurd. It is the *distinguishingness* of the qualities which is dwelt upon.

'He has character' implies that the person referred to has marked and formed qualities; it suggests individuality of mind and nature, but it is the *possession of qualities* which is most enforced on.

In 'He has lost his character,' character is used in the sense of *reputation*. The sentence means 'He has lost his reputation for some quality in his nature.' 'He has lost his character for . . . goodness, respectability, &c.

'That was good for the child's character' may be expressed 'That will have improved—have had a good effect upon—the *shape* of the child's nature,' character having its sense of the special shape of an individual nature.—THAMES VALLEY.

---

CLASS LIST FOR OCTOBER.

DISTINCTION.

*Lady Sybil Cuffe, No. 7, E.V.B., Margaret.*

CLASS I.

*Sepoy, Dinah Doe, Sintram, Scolland Yard, Tartar, Lindum, Miranda, M. E., Peter, Border Land, Skena Vaw, Phillis Debenham, Mabel, Ruby.*

CLASS II.

*None.*

Chelsea China heartily welcomes new competitors.

---

PRIZE WINNER FOR OCTOBER.

Miss Scott, St. Saviour's Vicarage, Sunbury Common, Middlesex.

---

CHARACTER STUDY FOR DECEMBER.

The Month of December.

---

SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR OCTOBER.

('Wise saws and modern instances.')

1. (a) 'A verse may find him who a sermon flies.'  
(b) 'Jewels, five words long,  
That on the stretched forefinger of all Time  
Sparkle for ever.'
  2. (a) 'Tell truth and shame the devil.'  
(b) 'God's gift was that man should conceive of truth,  
And yearn to gain it.'
  3. (a) 'To be weak is miserable.'  
(b) 'O well for him whose will is strong.'
  4. (a) 'Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,  
Makes that and the action fine.'  
(b) 'Hitch your waggon to a star.'
  5. (a) 'Be wisely worldly, but not worldly wise.'  
(b) 'Doänt thou marry for money, but go where money is.'
- Give author and source of each of the above quotations, and
6. Find another pair of sayings to match them.

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS.

(See SHAKSPERE, *As you Like It*, act ii. sc. 7.)

1. (a) 'The Church Porch.' GEORGE HERBERT.  
(b) 'The Princess,' act ii. TENNYSON.
2. (a) 'I Henry IV.,' act iii. sc. i. SHAKSPERE.  
(b) 'A death in the desert.' BROWNING.

3. (a) 'Paradise Lost,' bk. i. l. 157. MILTON.  
(b) 'Will.' TENNYSON.
4. (a) 'The Elixir.' GEORGE HERBERT.  
(b) 'Essay on Civilisation.' EMERSON.
5. (a) 'Emblems,' bk. ii. 2. QUARLES.  
(b) 'Northern Farmer' (New Style). TENNYSON.

6. A great variety of quotations has been given; in only two instances have two competitors chosen the same pairs. Several competitors have missed the point that the first quotation should be of an age sufficient to have given it the opportunity of becoming a 'wise saw,' to which description its proverbial form should likewise entitle it; while the 'modern instance' should be of later date, and should embody the same idea as the 'wise saw' with which it is paired. The following pair, sent by one competitor, form an excellent example:—

(a) 'Possession is nine points of the law' (*Old Proverb*).

(b) 'The good old rule  
Sufficeth them, the simple plan  
That they should take who have the power,  
And they should keep who can.'  
(WORDSWORTH. 'Rob Roy's Grave.')

One competitor gives 'Honesty is the best policy,' and 'An honest man's the noblest work of God.' Does she consider that these contain the same idea?

#### MARKS FOR OCTOBER.

60: *Cymraes, Isabel, Honeylands, Melton Mowbray, R. V. H.* 58: *Eleanor, Irnham, Syndicate, Thorshaven.* 56: *Scott, Sea Maiden.* 55: *Athena, Clio, Double-Dummy, Lenore, Malaprop, White Cat.* 54: *A. C. R.* 53: *All-Fours, Einsam, E. V. B.* 51: *Aspley Guise.* 50: *Cavalier, E. T., Klee, M. R. A., The Blue Cat.* 47: *Findhorn, Helen.* 45: *Frideswide, Mabel, W. Adey.* 43: *Swallow.* 42: *Blue Wings.* 30: *Trimmer.* 23: *Peter.* 20: *Kittiwake.*

Irnham is credited with 60 marks for September.

*Penfeather* omitted to write 'Search Questions' outside her envelope, and cannot be credited.

*Fourteen Streams* is credited with 60 marks for September.

*L. F. H.* is credited with 38 marks for August. She and other competitors do not seem to have observed that the Notice says that answers 'are to be sent by the 25th of each month to Miss Pridham,' &c., therefore they should always be sent to her, unless a fresh Notice is issued, but the Notice shall be repeated each month in future.

#### SEARCH QUESTIONS FOR DECEMBER.

(A seasonable feast.)

1. (a) 'At Christmas play and make good cheer;  
For Christmas comes but once a year.'
- (b) 'May good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both.'
2. (a) 'A bowl of turtle, green and glutinous.'
- (b) 'The Salmon is the king of fresh-water fish.' 'The Carp is the queen of rivers.' 'The Eel is a most dainty fish; the Romans have esteemed her the Helena of their feasts.'
3. (a) 'Oh! the Roast-beef of old England! Oh! the old English Roast-beef!'

(b) Who did make 'a bag-pudding, and stuff'd it well with plumbs?'

4. 'There were snipes, there were rails,  
There were woodcocks and quails,  
There were peacocks serv'd up in their pride, that is tails.'

Then came "sweets"—served in silver were tartlets and pies—in glass,  
Jellies composed of punch, calves' feet, and isinglass,  
Creams, and whipt-syllabubs, some hot, some cool.'

5. 'There were pears and apples clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes made . . . to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water . . .; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling in their fragrance ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle-deep through withered leaves. . . . It was not alone . . . that the raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white . . . the figs were moist and pulpy, the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly decorated boxes. . . .'

Give author and source of above.

6. Competitors are requested to contribute each a beverage to the banquet!

NOTICE.—Answers (to SEARCH QUESTIONS only) to be sent by the 25th of each month to *Miss Pridham, Westmoreland Lodge, Wimbledon Park, Wimbledon*. 'Search Questions' to be written outside the envelopes.

### THIRD SHELF.

#### NOTES AND QUERIES.

*Isabel* would feel very grateful if any of THE MONTHLY PACKET readers could tell her where she would find the following quotations:—

1. 'In earthly races  
To winners only do the Heralds call—  
In yonder high and holy places  
Success is nothing—'tis the work is all.'

2. Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.'

3. The position of the Jesuit Training College, 'Stoneyhurst,' so much mentioned in 'Helbeck of Bannisdale.'

#### 'THE GROWTH OF A GREAT FREE LIBRARY.'

##### Erratum.

The 'glosses' mentioned on page 303, line 12, are not Anglo-Saxon, but *Latin*, written by Irish monks about 800 A.D.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—The point of the second part of

'Tender-handed touch a nettle'

is lost in the version of your correspondent in the October MONTHLY PACKET, for certainly *all* human nature is not like nettles. I give it as I have seen it:—

'So it is with *common* natures,  
Use them gently, they rebel,  
But be rough as nutmeg graters,  
And the rogues will serve you well.'

A CONSTANT READER.

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—Will you allow me to ask the readers of THE MONTHLY PACKET if any one will share it with me for 1899, for half-price and postage, posting it about the middle of the month to me, who would keep the magazine?—BEATA.

DEAR CHELSEA CHINA,—I wish you would persuade some of the industrious members of the 'China Cupboard,' those who answer all the 'Search Questions,' to tell us how they manage to find time for everything, and make a Variety Subject of it. Do they get up early and sit up late? Do they sacrifice fresh air and exercise, or do they think it right to study out of doors on a fine summer's day? Do they divide their time methodically, and live by the clock, and do they *never* waste an odd five minutes in idling or dreaming, and find it has lengthened out to half an hour? Do they put everything in its place when they have done with it, or do they find, as I do, that it takes more time than seeking the things when one does not? Do they ever think it will be a saving of time to finish an exciting novel right off, and read nothing but very dry books for the rest of the week, and find the last part of the resolution impossible to carry out? Lastly, how many new books, newspapers, and periodicals do they feel bound to read so as to keep up with current events? These are some of the questions I am sure they could answer very instructively for the benefit of folk like myself, who are always pressed for time, and never seem to get very much after all. With apologies for troubling you.

Yours faithfully,

THAMES VALLEY.

---

## BOOK NOTES.

S.P.C.K.

VERY few of the publications of this society have passed through our hands this year. Some are spoken of by another hand. *The Post Woman* (3s. 6d.) and *Uncle Isaac's Money* (3s.) are careful and thorough studies of village and farm life. The dialect is good, and so is the local colouring, but dialect, for the class of readers for which these books are ostensibly issued, is not always an advantage, nor is local colouring always appreciated. Good as these stories and others are, we should like the 'Christian knowledge' to be rather more definitely inculcated. We miss the names of Miss Helen Shipton and Miss Bramston, and we are not sure that we should not welcome in these stories the excellent clergyman or worthy grandmother who pointed the morals of our youth. It is as great a mistake to suppose that young readers do not look for good advice in a Sunday-school prize as to think that they will never read with profit a book of a less didactic character. The little books do not lay themselves open to this criticism. There is a nice little set of sixpenny and ninepenny ones, but they are too small for the parish library, and too grown up for the little ones' prizes. *Reuben Thorne's Temptation*, by Mrs. Henry Clark, is a capital story.

WELLS GARDNER, DARTON & Co.

These publishers have sent an excellent selection of books and reports for our notice. *Overlooked*, by Bessie Hawker (3s. 6d.) is a really charming Devonshire story. The dialect is first rate, and the humours as well as the superstitions of the little Devon village most cleverly done. There is still considerable need of a warning against the wiles of 'witches.' The heroine is a bright and natural girl, and though we care less about her and her actor lover, they will no doubt be the main points in the book for young readers. *The Travels of Baron Munchausen*, cleverly illustrated (3s. 6d.), will introduce that worthy to the rising generation—a capital

prize or gift book for a boy. *For Old Sake's Sake and Our Next Door Neighbours*, by Stella Austin, have all the author's charming style and sentiment. Perhaps the sentiment is a little wanting in strength, and the prettiness of the little girls and their frocks too much insisted on, but *sympathy* for others is beautifully inculcated, and children always like these books. *The Children of Swift Creek*, by Noel West (2s.), is a reprint, we think, of a spirited Colonial story, which has a sequel. *The Child of the Light House*, by Marion Andrews (1s. 6d.), and *The Little General*, by J. Lez Petherick (1s. 6d.), are short historical tales very well written. *The Whipping Boy*, adapted from the German by E. A. Brelly, is a story of an imaginary country, such as Zenda. It is very amusing, and the illustrations are excellent. *The Fortunes of the Charlton Family* (1s.) is very improving, and rather old-fashioned in style. It is, however, a nice book.

We have also received volumes of *Leading Strings, Sunday, and Sunday Reading Book*, which are wonders of editing and illustration. Dr. Jolliboy's *A.B.C.*, illustrated by Gordon Browne, ought to be bought by any one who sees the backs of the four infant boys on the cover, and *The Littlest Ones*, by Maud Humphrey and Elizabeth Tucker, is full of pictures, verses, and stories, and is exactly fitted for a present to the young married school-mistress's first baby, or to any other village favourite of refined tastes.

*The Pleasures of Literature and the Solace of Books*, compiled by Joseph Shaylor, with an introduction by Andrew Lang (3s. 6d.), is a beautifully got up little book, with quotations about books from standard authors. A very pretty literary gift book of an uncommon kind.—CHRISTABEL COLERIDGE.

Those who enjoyed Miss Yonge's *Pilgrimage of the Ben Beriah* will gladly welcome another work of the same kind in the *Patriots of Palestine* (Nat. Soc.), with its vivid sketch of those troublous times connected with the exploits of Judas Maccabeus. It is right that we should be reminded of what was borne for conscience' sake by unnamed believers, 'of whom the world was not worthy.' As in the *Pilgrimage*, our interest is concentrated on a single family, whose flight to the mountains is told with the author's practised skill, so that we feel at home with them at once, while the charm of 'the pleasant land' hangs over every description of hill and cave, and plain and stream, culminating in the partial deliverance of the Holy City, and the 'feast of the dedication,' endeared to all our hearts.

There is a certain pathos in this noble struggle, not only in the fall of the hero on the field of battle, but in the fact that this is the last recorded history of Hebrew warfare, as waged between those that served God and those that served Him not. That Judas died in the discharge of his duty seems to foreshadow the changed dispensation that was in its way, under which worldly success was no longer to be the reward of service, but apparent failures, defeat, and death, would make 'more than conquerors' the soldiers of the Lord.

By an oversight of the artist who designed the spirited figure on the cover 'the conquering hero' is represented as carrying his sword—presumably won from Apollonius—in his left hand instead of his right.

There is considerable merit in *A Roman Household*, by E. Norway (Nat. Soc.). Its descriptions of the great city in the days of Nero, with its contrasts of splendour and cruelty, are full of spirit, and the interest in the fate of the Jewish Christians, brought thither as slaves, is well kept up. Their different characters, and their influence over the households to which they belong, are carefully drawn out; but the introduction of the Coliseum is a mistake. There was, probably, more than one Circus in Nero's time, and one is said to have borne his name, and to have been the scene of Christian martyrdom; but, according to Murray's Handbook, the Coliseum was begun by Vespasian, A.D. 72. Titus continued the work, after the fall of Jerusalem, which enabled him to employ a great number of Jewish slaves in the work, and it was finally completed by Domitian.

The writer of *The Laird's Legacy* has, in her story of *My Lady's Slippers*, by M. S. Debenham (Nat. Soc.), introduced us once more to the days of Marlborough and Eugene; but in this instance the scene is laid at home, and the wars are only spoken of, and known by their results. If not quite as graceful a story as its predecessor, it is a thoroughly healthy book, kind and generous in its sentiments, and with some sketches of character that deserve to be more fully worked out. The device for concealing the diamonds is not new. It was said to be much in favour with the watch-making trades in the old smuggling days; justified, perhaps, by the reflection that a man might as well have watches in his shoes as clocks in his stockings.—ANNA H. DRURY.

We must hope, for the comfort of the Christmas holidays, that there are not many brothers at school as untrustworthy and lacking in common sense as the one that led *Gwen*, by Penelope Leslie (Nat. Soc.), into scrapes. The loyalty of the little sister to her leader, in spite of everything, is natural and praiseworthy, and other sisters may find her misfortunes more amusing than she did.

It is easier to relate other people's sayings and doings than to imagine how they commend themselves to our friends, the dogs. With all her love for the Pincher and Puff race, the author of *The Autobiography of a Bulldog*, by Mrs. Neville Peel (Nat. Soc.), is too apt to forget her canine character and mention things that a dog would not trouble himself about at all. The piece of satirical malice attributed to Pincher is more in character with the White Lady of Avenel than with one who would only have followed his retrieving instinct.

There are some good short stories in the collection beginning with *Jo, a Stupid Boy*, by K. Vernham (Nat. Soc.), and the boys for whom they are written cannot fail to find them interesting. Among the best are *Charles Dénning's Chance* and *A Disreputable Cur*, while what the clergy of *Clacton* went through when their choir was mislaid is more than one can venture to imagine.

Still more attractive, perhaps, will be *The Stone Door*, by F. C. Badrick (Nat. Soc.), as full of adventures as even youthful readers could wish. Honesty overpowered by treacherous craft, and righted after years of waiting, villains hiding plunder in caves, and trying to take each other in, a secret door in an old mansion, and lost jewels unexpectedly turning up, form only a part of this engaging volume.

*Reine's Kingdom*, by L. E. Tiddeman (Nat. Soc.), is a pretty story of girlish experiences. It is easy to imagine the kind of adoration a girl might feel for an older friend like Miss Farran, who showed her so much attention, and prized her abilities so highly. It was best for Reine that her eyes should be gradually opened to the real worth of her idol, by personal experience, even though to lose esteem for one you have loved is a harder thing to bear than separation.

We must just point out what the kind French gentleman ought to have known too well; a tableau, representing the execution of Marie Antoinette would require, not a block, which can be artistic, but a guillotine, which is quite a different matter.—ANNA H. DRURY.

We own ourselves to be a little disappointed by the S.P.C.K. packet of this autumn. To parochial eyes it is difficult to find anything to be of use to anybody. Miss Coleridge's *Rough Cast* and Miss Clarke's *Jasper Thorne's Sweet Briar* deal with girls educated beyond their families; and Annette Lyster's *Alured d'Eresby's Inheritance* is interesting as a picture of the struggles that the resolute renunciation of worldliness caused in the old Evangelical days. *The Victory that Overcometh*, by Annie Gee, is a good Early Christian story, only the modern love had better have been left out. *Number One*, by Miss Coleridge, is good for town lending and reading, and



*The Dog at Number Twelve*, by Catherine MacSorley, is a pretty child story, but the only one of all the set that we really like for, or could read to, an audience of poor women is *From Hand to Hand*, where a copy of Hymns Ancient and Modern is found with a verse marked, and sent on, through numerous persons of very different kinds, each marking a verse which speaks to the next.

Might we humbly petition that another year the stories might be of a superior kind in literary merit, and also that there might be more consideration of the need of those who have to find readings aloud, lending-library books, and prizes likely to be really valued.—CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

## JOHN KEBLE'S CHURCH.

### FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

A generation has been born and grown up since the consecration of Hursley Church on October 24, 1848. Few were present at the jubilee of the consecration day who could remember it, but it was a marked day in Church history, since it became possible there to carry out the devotional habits that have become almost universal in our churches. Indeed, they have become so much a matter of course to many that we can only hope that the reverence which inspired them may not be forgotten when they are almost mechanical. The octave of sermons on the Church services were an admirable reminder of their true import.—CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

## SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

### THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DECEMBER.

45. Show how the Hawaiian Islands for seventy years previously to 1862 appealed for help to the Church of England, and with what result.

46. Give an account of our beginning mission work there in the reign of Kamehameha IV.

47. Sum up shortly the progress during the twenty-five years' episcopate of Bishop Willis.

48. Compare the slow conversion of Europe with the spread of modern missions.

Books recommended :—*Classified Digest of S.P.G. Records* ; *S.P.G. Report for 1896* ; *Under His Banner* ; *The Gradual Conversion of Europe*, by Maclear, S.P.G., 1d. ; *Comparative Progress of Ancient and Modern Missions*, by Bp. Lightfoot, S.P.G., 1d.

Answers to be sent to Bog-oak, Industrial School, Andover, by Jan. 1st, when payments for ensuing year, 1s., will be due.

#### CLASS LIST FOR SEPTEMBER.

##### CLASS I.

Ierne ; M.P., 36 ; Klondyke, 32.

##### CLASS II.

Veritas, 29 ; Constans et Fidelis, 23.

##### CLASS III.

Honeysuckle, 17. (Two answers.)

#### REMARKS.

Are we to go on next year ? One more effort will be made. Some members think the subjects too large—though can Bog-oak help it if when an answer *might* be given in five lines as many pages are sent ? The

industry is refreshing, but not her fault. Next year, therefore, the subject will be India, and only two questions will be set each month. If this fills our ranks, we will go on. If not, we will end in June.

33. Beginnings of C.M.S. well done. There certainly seemed room for a Society to teach the purely heathen when the badly supported S.P.G. could scarcely supply the Colonies. The *principles* on which it works are practically as follows: They grant missionaries to the bishops, and pay them themselves, thus keeping the governing power to a great extent. S.P.G. grants the money, and the bishops find and pay their men. This seems the more excellent way for Church people.

34. No commercial treaty by any nation with Japan till 1858 (except Dutch). Those of 1854 (not 1853) were merely amicable. Distribution of Sees: English Church in Hondo. (1) *South Tokyo*, all south-west of the Imperial city to limits of Kyoto diocese. (2) *Osaka*, extreme western end of Main Island, including islands of Inland Sea. (3) Island of *Kynshu*. (4) Island of *Hokkaido* or *Yezo*. American jurisdiction. (1) *North Tokyo*, northern end of Main Island. (2) Kyoto, between South Tokyo and Osaka.

35. Progress of work, and 36. Outlook of work well and thoughtfully done.

## 'MONTHLY PACKET' NOTICES.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

The readers of the 'Monthly Packet' are invited to address **CHELSEA CHINA** on any subject the discussion of which occurs to them as likely to interest others, especially in connection with articles appearing in the Magazine.

### CHINA CUPBOARD PRIZES—

*Variety Specimens.* Prize, monthly, 5s.

*Search Questions (Who, When, and Where).* Prize, for six months taken together, £1 1s.

*Prose Competition.* Monthly Prize, 5s., or 10s., according to merit.

### RULES for the above—

(1) Papers must be sent by the 25th of each month, addressed to **CHELSEA CHINA**, care of Messrs. A. D. Innes & Co., Limited; they must NOT be addressed to 'the Editors.' (2) Each envelope must be marked *outside* with the subject to which it refers. Papers under separate competitions or discussions must be in separate envelopes. (3) The correspondent's name and address must be written on every paper: the use of a *nom de plume* for the lists is optional. (4) If competitors fail to comply with any rule, their papers will be disqualified. (5) The real name of the prize-winner is published in each case. (6) There are no entrance fees. (7) Prizes cannot be taken by the same person twice in a half-year.

[The Editors of the 'Monthly Packet' will feel obliged if All Contributors will write their names and addresses clearly on their MSS., and will enclose stamps for return. Unless these conditions are complied with, the Editors cannot undertake to preserve, return, or enter into correspondence about MSS. Much trouble is saved if accompanying letters are enclosed in the parcel instead of being sent separately.]

The utmost care is taken in returning MSS., but the Editors can only hold themselves absolutely responsible for such as are sent to them at their own request.]



